HEADS OF ENGLISH UNITARIAN HISTORY

ALEXANDER GORDON

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OF

English Unitarian History

WITH APPENDED LECTURES ON

BAXTER AND PRIESTLEY

BY

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PREFACE.

THE history of English Unitarianism is less known than it deserves to be. Many of its passages being obscure, and the threads of its story being complicated, it has not presented itself as an easy study. Moreover, while in the constitution of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association the diffusion of biblical, theological and literary knowledge is contemplated, no express provision is made for the dissemination of historical information. Yet the history of the Unitarian movement is the key to its meaning.

The following outline is the result of an attempt to lay bare the framework of the subject, as a guide to learners. For their aid a few references are given; not to confirm the text by indicating its primary sources; but rather to meet the reader's enquiry for further particulars, by directing him to publications presumed to be fairly accessible.

The appended addresses are intended as specimens of an ampler treatment of special passages. They deal with three important sections: the Nonconformist exodus of 1662; the Unitarian re-birth of the last century; and the legalisation of doctrinal change by the Chapels Act of 1844.

A. G.

CHRONOLOGICAL LANDMARKS.

1198—Foundation of *Fratres Domus Sanctae Trinitatis* (*Trinitarii*).
1458—Pecock deprived.
1546—*Trinitarii* used in modern sense by Serveto.
1548—Recantation of Assheton.
1550—Organisation of the 'Strangers' Church.'
1551—Martyrdom of George Van Parris.
1552—Second Prayer-book of Edward VI.
1553—Martyrdom of Miguel Serveto.
1555—Martyrdom of Patrick Pakingham.
1556—Philpot's *Apology* 'for spittyng on an Arian.'
1559—Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity.
1564—Death of Ochino.
Death of Calvin.
1565—Acontius' *Stratagemata Satanae.*
1572—Thirty-nine Articles.
1579—Martyrdom of Hamont.
1583—Martyrdom of Lewes.
1587—Martyrdom of Cole.
1589—Martyrdom of Kett.
1600—First known use of term *Unitarius.*
1604—Hampton Court Conference.
Death of Socinus.
1609—Racovian Catechism dedicated to James I.
1611—Vorst's *De Deo* burned.

1612—Martyrdom of Legate.
Martyrdom of Wightman.
1614—Racovian Catechism burned.
1640—Canon against Socinian books.
1641—Ussher's scheme of episcopacy.
1643-59—Westminster Assembly.
1643—Solemn League and Covenant.
Cheynell's *Rise, Growth and Danger of Socinianisme.*
1644—Persecution of Bidle began.
1645-47—Imprisonment of Best.
1646—Ordinance for Presbyterianism in Lancashire (2nd Oct.).
1647—Earliest printed tracts of Bidle and Best.
First ordinance for a Presbyterian establishment (13th Oct.).
1648—Second ordinance for a Presbyterian establishment (31st Jan.).
Ordinance making denial of the Trinity capital.
Westminster Confession of Faith issued.
1649—First Universalist publications in English.
1650—Knowles preaches at Chester.
1651—Fry expelled from Parliament.
Hobbes' *Leviathan.*
1652—Bidle's church in London.
Racovian Catechism again burned.
Baxter's Worcestershire Agreement.
Racovian Catechism in English.
1653—Antitrinitarian church at Dukinfield.
1654—Cromwell's Triers (20th March) and Expurgators (28th Aug.).
Parliamentary Committee for Toleration.
1655–58—Banishment of Bidle.
1656—Chewney's *Anti-Socinianism.*
1658—Death of Cromwell.
Independent revision of the Westminster Confession.

1659—Lancashire movement for Union with Independents.
1660—Restoration of the Monarchy.
Charles II.'s Declaration for Ussher's scheme.
1661—Proclamation against Conventicles.
Savoy Conference.
First Test Act.
1662—Act of Uniformity.
Death of Bidle.
Charles II.'s first Declaration of Indulgence.
1664—First Conventicle Act (repealed 1863).
1665—Five Miles Act (repealed 1812).
1665–66—Imprisonment of Knowles.
1665—Publication of *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* begun at Amsterdam.
1666—Nonconformist 'tabernacles' erected after the Great Fire.
1667—Milton's *Paradise Lost.*
Baxter's *Reasons for the Christian Religion.*
1668—Penn's *Sandy Foundation Shaken.*
Baxter's proposals for Union of Nonconformists.
1669—Sand's *Nucleus.*
1670–98—Frankland's Academy.
1670—Second Conventicle Act (repealed 1812).
1672—Charles II.'s second Declaration of Indulgence.
Pinners' Hall Lectureship.
1673—Second Test Act (repealed 1828).
Indulgence voided.
1678—Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.*
1681—Bill for Relief of Nonconformists passed both houses.
1682—First known use of term Unitarian.
1687—James II.'s Declaration for Liberty of Conscience.
Term Unitarian first appears in print.
1689—Toleration Act.
Common Fund for Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

1690—Union of Presbyterian and Congregational divines.
Westminster Confession subscribed in Scotland.
1691—Death of Baxter.
1693—Rupture of London Fund.
1694—Rupture of London Lectureship.
Prosecution of Freke.
1695—Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity.*
1695–1745—French Uniform Church at Canterbury.
1697—Death of Firmin.
1700—General Baptists sanction Antitrinitarians.
1705—Emlyn's London church.
1705–7—Locke's *Paraphrases.*
1705–6—Hickeringill's *History of Priestcraft.*
1706–38—Grove, tutor at Taunton.
1710—Whiston deprived of his chair.
1712—Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity.*
1716–19—The *Occasional Papers.*
1719—Salters' Hall Rupture.
The *Independent Whig.*
Mint Meeting opened at Exeter.
1726—Trial of Elwall.
1727–57—Lardner's *Credibility.*
1729–51—Doddridge's Academy at Northampton.
1736—Butler's *Analogy of Religion.*
1740—Taylor on *Original Sin.*
Fleming preaches Humanitarian doctrine.
1741—Sykes on *Sacrifices.*
1749—Hartley's *Observations on Man.*
1751—Taylor on *Romans.*
1755—Priestley broke with the Independents.
1757–83—Warrington Academy.
1758—Lindsey became a Unitarian.
1759—Lardner on *The Logos* (written 1730).
1761—Seddon's Manchester sermons.
1764—Robertson resigned his preferments.
Lindsey's Sunday School at Catterick.
1765–68—Tucker's *Light of Nature.*

1767—Cardale's *True Doctrine of the New Testament.*
1768—Priestley became a Socinian.
1769–88—*Theological Repository.*
1770—Priestley's *Appeal.*
1771—Farmer on *Miracles.*
1773—Lindsey resigned Catterick.
1774—Essex Street Unitarian Chapel opened.
1779—Revision of the Toleration Act.
1786—Priestley's *History of Early Opinions.*
Manchester Academy founded.
1788—Belsham joined Unitarians.
1789—First Unitarian Lay Preachers.
1791—Unitarian Society.
Birmingham Riots.
1794—Paine's *Age of Reason.*
Priestley's removal to America.
1797—Martin's *Letter.*
1799—Sturch's *Apeleutherus.*
1804—Death of Priestley.
1806—Unitarian Fund.
Cooke expelled from the Wesleyans.
1808—*Improved Version* of the New Testament.
Death of Lindsey.
1810—Death of Barnes.
1813—Trinity Act.
1815—Yates' *Vindication.*
1816—Unitarian Fellowship Funds.
1817—Wolverhampton case begun.
1819—Channing's Baltimore sermon.
Unitarian Association.
1825—Manchester Socinian controversy.
British and Foreign Unitarian Association.
1830–42—Hewley Case.
1833—Manchester Domestic Mission.
Yates' scheme of Presbyterianism.
1834—Porter and Bagot discussion.
1839—Liverpool Unitarian controversy.

1842—Parker's *Discourse.*
1842—Unitarians excluded from the Hewley Trust.
1844—Dissenters' Chapels Act.
1846—Barker's printing press.
1847—Hibbert Trust founded.
1851—Greg's *Creed of Christendom.*
1854—Unitarian Home Missionary Board founded.
1856—Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund.
1861—*Essays and Reviews.*
1882—National Conference (triennial) begun.
Sustentation Fund.

HEADS OF ENGLISH UNITARIAN HISTORY

SYNOPSIS.

Introduction. Three Periods: I., dating from 1548; II., dating from 1682; III., dating from 1774.

I.—1. Lollards. 2. Foreign Congregations. 3. Assheton. 4. Influences from Holland. 5. Socinian influence. 6. The Commonwealth. 7. The Restoration. 8. Milton and Bunyan.

II.—9. Primary document of English Unitarianism. 10. Firmin. 11. Consequences of the Toleration Act. 12. Union of Dissent. 13. Unitarianism among Congregationals. 14. Clarke. 15. Baptists, Friends, and Huguenots. 16. Baxter and Locke. 17. Salters' Hall. 18. The liberal Laity. 19. Dissenting Academies; Grove and Doddridge. 20. John Taylor. 21. Humanitarians. 22. Wesley. 23. Priestley.

III.—24. Lindsey. 25. Restriction of the Unitarian name. 26. Belsham. 27. The Unitarian Societies. 28. Birmingham Riots. 29. Paine. 30. Periodicals. 31. Unitarian Fund and Missions. 32. Legalising of Unitarianism; Unitarian Association. 33. Channing, Tuckerman, and Rammohun Roy. 34. Arianism. 35. Controversies. 36. Dissenters' Chapels Act. 37. Decline and revival of Unitarian zeal. 38. Newer biblical Criticism. 39. Conclusion.

[This sketch was originally prepared for a meeting at Chicago, in October 1893; a few points have been since added.]

HEADS OF ENGLISH UNITARIAN HISTORY.

INTRODUCTION.

In the history of the Unitarian movement in England, three distinct stages are to be marked. Taken together, they exhibit some continuity, as well as some overlapping; but the prime business of the historical enquirer is to attend to those distinguishing features which part them from each other.

I. The stage of sporadic Antitrinitarianism, native and exotic, dating apparently from the recantation of Assheton in 1548.

II. The stage of a comprehensive School of Thought, taking the Unitarian name, and dating from the primary Unitarian document of 1682. In this stage, the term Unitarian denotes a specific tenet of Theology; namely, the Unipersonality of the Godhead.

III. The stage of Unitarian Church Life, dating from the opening of Lindsey's Chapel in 1774. In this stage, the term Unitarian denotes a determining principle of associated Religion; namely, the limitation of divine worship to a single being, God the Father.

[For the general subject see Lindsey, *Historical View*, 1783; Turner, *Lives of Eminent Unitarians*, 1840; Tayler, *Retrospect of Religious Life in England*, 1845 (Martineau's Edition, 1876); J. R. Beard, *Unitarianism exhibited in its Actual Condition*, 1846; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, 1850; Spears, *Record of Unitarian Worthies*, 1877; Brooke Herford, *Story of Religion in England*, 1877 (second edition, 1893); Bonet-Maury, *Early Sources of English Unitarian Christianity*, 1884. Several of these writers occupy the standpoint of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill polemics.]

PERIOD I.

1. Lollards.

Prior to the Reformation, some traces of Antitrinitarian tendency may be observed in the Lollards; but they are slight and uncertain. Some modern writers have misconceived the ground of the Lollard rejection of the worship of the human Christ. Like most Protestants, they worshipped Christ in his divine nature alone, refusing that adoration which the Catholic offers to his human nature also.

In the direction of primitive doctrine, the *Repressing of over mich wyting* [blaming] *the Clergie* (1449), and *Book of Faith* (1456), by **Reginald Pecock** (1390–1460), bishop of St. Asaph, were more cogent than the Lollard tenets. He sought to stay the Lollard movement by setting aside ecclesiastical infallibility, and taking the appeal to Scripture and reason. For this he was deprived in 1458.

[For Pecock see Perry, *Student's English Church History*, 1890, i. 472 sq.]

2. Foreign Congregations.

After the Reformation there is a certain amount of Antitrinitarian tendency in all the Foreign Congregations tolerated in England. Its volume has been exaggerated

in two ways. (*a*) Heretics, and there were many, who denied that Christ 'took flesh of the Virgin,' have been treated as rejecting the miraculous birth; whereas, they augmented its marvel, by viewing Christ's body as of purely celestial make. This was a Gnostic tenet revived, and is usually known as the Valentinian view. (*b*) Advocates of tolerance, like **Giacomo Contio** (1520–1565), known as Acontius, have been quite erroneously regarded as endorsing heresies they were unwilling to proscribe.

Lelio Francesco Sozini (1525–1562) was in England for a few months in 1547–1548; **Bernardino Tommasini** (1487–1564), known as Ochino, for a longer period (20th December 1547 to 1553), but neither was at that time under suspicion of Antitrinitarian heresy.

Still there were undoubtedly Antitrinitarians among the Foreign Congregations. **George Van Parris**, a surgeon from Maintz, was burned for Arianism at Smithfield, on 25th April 1551. **Juán Cassiodoro de Reyna** (d. 1594), minister of the Spanish congregation (1558–1563), was one of the very few avowed disciples of **Miguel Serveto** (1511–1553). For the origin, however, of English Antitrinitarian thought, it is vain to look to the 'Strangers' Church.' Its internal heresies did not touch English opinion. Moreover, the appearance of Antitrinitarianism in England precedes the organisation, in 1550, of the Foreign Congregations.

[Bonet-Maury, *Early Sources*; compare review in *Christian Life*, 21st May and 4th June 1881. For Serveto and Lelio Sozini see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition.]

3. Assheton.

On 28th December, 1548, **John Assheton**, a priest, was brought up before Cranmer for denying in his preaching the deity and atonement of Christ. He is the first Englishman who is known to have been arraigned on such a charge; he fully admitted and recanted his 'damned opinions.'

Following him, we have **Patrick Pakingham,** burned at Uxbridge as an Arian in August 1555, and a number of laymen in Kent, who saved themselves by recantation.

Antitrinitarian also were many of the contemporary Familists, such as **Christopher Vitells** (or Viret), the first Familist preacher (1555) in England, who also recanted. To this class probably belonged the so-called 'Arian,' a fellow prisoner with **John Philpot** (d. 1555), archdeacon of Winchester, on whom the good archdeacon spat, to 'relieve that sorrow which he conceived for that blasphemy.'

[Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*, and references there given.]

4. Influences from Holland.

In subsequent cases (1579–1612) belonging to the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., we can trace the influence of the writings of **Erasmus** (1465–1536) and of intercourse with Holland.

Two remarkable features are common to these cases, which all belong to the Eastern counties; viz., (1) the high personal character and deep biblical religiousness of the men, freely testified by their opponents; and (2) the advanced type of their Christology. **Matthew Hamont,** wheelwright, of Hethersett, Norfolk, who named his son Erasmus, was burned on 20th May 1579. He maintained that Christ had sinned. He had followers: **John Lewes,** burned on 18th September 1583, and **Peter Cole,** tanner, of Ipswich, burned 1587. **Frances Kett,** a Norfolk man, and Fellow of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, was burned on 14th January 1589; he held Christ to be 'a good man,' who suffered 'for his owne sinnes,' adding a mystical belief that he was 'to suffer againe for the sinnes of the world,' and 'be made God after his second resurrection.' All these suffered at Norwich. The brothers **Legate,** of whom Thomas died in prison, and Bartholomew was burned on 18th March

1612 (the last victim at Smithfield), were natives of Essex, and connected in business with Holland, Bartholomew had been a preacher there among the Seekers; he held Christ to be 'a meere man,' but 'borne free from sinne,' and he believed in his atonement.

Distinct from these is a Midland county man, Edward Wightman, an Antitrinitarian Baptist of very confused opinions, who fancied himself the promised Paraclete, and was burned at Lichfield on 11th April 1612.

[*Dictionary of National Biography*, for Hamont, Kett and Legate; Wallace, *ut sup.*; also for an ideal picture, Miss Gregg's *Bartholomew Legate.*]

5. Socinian Influence.

These fires of 1612 were effective for their purpose; we hear no more of overt Antitrinitarianism till 1644. Meanwhile, many works of this class, in Latin, had been imported from Holland and studied by the learned. The dedication of the Latin version of the *Racovian Catechism* (projected and begun by Socinus, finished by his friends in 1605) to James I., in 1609, had been fruitless; except, perhaps, in provoking James to the display of a militant orthodoxy, directed abroad against the Dutch Antitrinitarian, **Conrad Vorst** (1569–1619), and at home against Vorst's book (burned at St. Paul's Cross, in 1611), and the Legates; the *Racovian Catechism* itself was burned in 1614, which may be the date of issue of the Dutch reprint. Over minds of the stamp of **Lord Falkland** (1610–1643), **William Chillingworth** (1602–1644), and **John Hales** (1584–1656), all of them Anglicans and royalists, the writings of **Fausto Paulo Sozzini** (1539–1604), known as Socinus, exercised great influence; but (except, perhaps, Chillingworth for a time) they adopted, not his theology, but his reduction of essentials, and his idea of a comprehensive toleration.

[Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*; *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Chillingworth, Falkland and Hales. For F. P. Sozzini see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition.]

6. The Commonwealth.

Among the abortive canons passed on the initiative of Laud in the Convocation of Canterbury, 30th June 1640, was one (the fifth) *ipso facto* excommunicating printers, importers, and readers of Socinian books. These canons were condemned in the Long Parliament (14th December) as 'of very dangerous consequence,' but the condemnation implied no favour to Socinianism. **Francis Cheynell,** D.D. (1608–1665), a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–1659), wrote fiercely of the danger of this heresy. No Socinian book was printed in England till 1647; nor did any such book, while the Long Parliament lasted, escape a public burning. By Ordinance of 2nd May 1648, denial of the Trinity was made a capital crime. **Paul Best** (1590–1657) and **John Bidle** (1616–1662), both belonging to the Socinian school, were saved from the capital penalty by the interposition of Cromwell. Best, a country gentleman, a mathematician, and a poet, had learned his opinions in the course of his travels in Poland and Transylvania. Bidle, an Oxford tutor and schoolmaster, had reached his conclusions through his own study of the Scriptures. This was also the case with his Arian friend **John Knowles** (*fl.* 1646–1668), a lay preacher of some eloquence. Both were Independents, and gatherers of churches of that order. Knowles' preaching at Chester (1650) is the earliest known course of avowed Antitrinitarianism in an English pulpit. **John Fry** (1609–1657) was, for a Sabellian pamphlet, deprived of his seat in Parliament on 24th February 1651. Bidle's short-lived church was begun in London in 1652, but closed in 1654. There was a local Antitrinitarian secession from the Independents, due to the influence of Knowles, in 1653. Bidle rendered great service not only by his own writings, but by instigating the publication of the Racovian Catechism, in Latin (1651), an edition which

was burned by the hangman on 6th and 8th April 1652, also in English (1652), and by translating the *Life of Socinus* (1653). The spread of Socinian doctrine may be measured by the number and virulence of the writers against it, *e.g.*, **John Owen,** D.D. (1616–1683), **Nicholas Chewney,** D.D. (1610–1685), and **Nicholas Estwick,** B.D., (*fl.* 1633–1656), besides many others.

Among the Baptists there were Antitrinitarian preachers, *e.g.*, **Thomas Collier** (*fl.* 1634–1691), among the Particular, and **Paul Hobson** (*fl.* 1646–1660), among the General Baptists.

In the looser sects, Ranters, Seekers, etc., a sporadic Antitrinitarianism was common, and was closely connected with Universalism. The first Universalist preacher in England was probably **Richard Coppin** (*fl.* 1646–1659), who began to publish in 1649. **John Reeve** (1608–1658) and **Lodowicke Muggleton** (1609–1698) founded, in 1652, an Antitrinitarian sect, which still exists; its theology anticipates that of Swedenborg by maintaining that the human Christ is the only true God.

To preachers, of every complexion of doctrine, considerable latitude, in spite of Ordinances, was given under the Commonwealth, especially in its later years, when, as the Presbyterians plaintively put it, the Independents claimed liberty of conscience, 'not only for themselves, but for all men.' The standard of theological belief for the three kingdoms was the Westminster Confession, of 1648. But adhesion to it was not yet enforced by subscription, a Scottish measure of much later date (1690). The only formulary to which subscription was legally required was the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), which binds to nothing more specific in matter of doctrine than 'the word of God and the example of the best reformed churches.' The pledge taken (1643) by members of the Westminster Assembly ran thus: 'I, A. B., do seriously promise and vow, in the presence of

Almighty God, that in this Assembly, of which I am a member, I will maintain nothing in point of doctrine, but what I believe to be most agreeable to the word of God; nor in point of discipline, but what may make most for God's glory and the peace and good of this church.' In the preface (1659) by **John Owen,** D.D. (1616–1683), to the revision of the Confession issued by the Independents, their attitude is thus indicated: 'The Spirit of Christ is in himself too free, great and generous a Spirit, to suffer himself to be used by any human arm, to whip men into belief; he drives not, but gently leads into all truth . . . . which would lose of its preciousness and value if that sparkle of freeness shone not in it.'

[Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*; *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Best, Bidle, Coppin, Fry, Knowles and Muggleton; *Christian Life*, 21st January 1888, for Collier and Hobson; 3rd September 1892, for Chewney; 10th September 1892, for Bidle and the Baptists; Mr. Gunthorpe's life of Bidle is still unpublished.]

7. The Restoration.

With the Restoration (1660) and the Uniformity Act (1662) came a period of severe restriction. It is true that early in 1662 collections for the exiled Antitrinitarians of Poland were made in several parish churches, at **Firmin's** suggestion. But on 1st June 1662, Bidle was arrested while holding his little conventicle, which had been resumed in 1658; within four months he died in prison. In 1668 **William Penn** (1644–1718) was sent to the Tower for his *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, a Sabellian publication. **John Cooper** (1620–1682), a follower of Bidle, ejected from Cheltenham, is related to have maintained a conventicle there till his death, but this is a solitary and rather doubtful instance.

[Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.* for Cooper and Penn; for Uniformity Act see appended lecture on Baxter.]

8. Milton and Bunyan.

All these overt thrusts of heresy were apart from the main stream of Puritan development. But it was somewhat otherwise with the influence of the *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Regained* (1671) of **John Milton** (1608–1674). The biblicism of Milton has in many directions been more operative than the Bible itself, in shaping the form in which biblical ideas have been admitted into the English mind. His definite Antitrinitarianism was unknown till 1825; yet the sympathetic student of his great poems would necessarily become habituated to points of view essentially Antitrinitarian. Nor be it forgotten that, while penned as a manual of Puritan doctrine, nothing perhaps has contributed more to the humanising of English theology than that masterpiece of heart and humour, the *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) of **John Bunyan** (1628–1688).

[For Milton see Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*, and Channing's Essay on Milton; for Bunyan, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

PERIOD II.

9. Primary Document of English Unitarianism.

In August, 1682, an address, taking the shape of an *Epistle*, with appended tractates, was offered to Ahmet Ben Ahmet, ambassador from Morocco in London, by 'two philosophers,' who withheld their names, but claimed to represent 'that sect of Christians that are called Unitarians.' The time was remarkable; persecution of all Dissent was then at its height. The address was remarkable; for the first time, so far as is known, the term Unitarian was employed in an English document. Strictly speaking, this is its first appearance in any document. The form Unitari*an* (like Trinitari*an*) is exclusively English, just as unitar*isch* (trinitar*isch*) is exclusively German (with a Dutch cognate). The term, without the suffix, first appears (in adjectival form, *unitaria religio*) in a decree of the Transylvanian Diet, at Léczfalva, 25th October 1600. Elek Jakab believes it to have originated in the period 1569–1571, but this is not proved. It was ratified by the Transylvanian Unitarians, as the official designation of their church, at the Complanatio Deesiana, in 1638. The Polish followers of Socinus never adopted it; though on the title page of the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, 1665, they admit that the name was given to them by others.

The use of the Unitarian name may have been suggested by the motive of the address. Perhaps the term was originally meant for the followers of Muhammad, the sense it still bears in Gibbon, and in Wesley's well-known 'Unitarian fiend'; just as the much earlier term, 'Trinitarii,' was devised as the name of a religious Order (1198), to antagonise Islâm, and was rejected by **John Calvin** (1509–1564) as a criminal insult, when applied (1546) in its present sense by Serveto. Be that as it may, the unknown 'philosophers' of 1682 employ the Unitarian name in its broadest scope, as denoting all who believe in 'an onely Soveraign God (who hath no distinction or plurality in persons),' and they seek to win over Ben Ahmet to the Christian type of Unitarianism.

[See this document in full, with introduction, *Christian Life*, September-October, 1892. It may be useful here to add some brief notes by way of definition. While all Christians hold that there is but one God, they differ as to the position of the Son and the Holy Spirit. *Sabellians* hold that the one God is threefold in aspect; the three 'persons,' Father, Word (or Son) and Holy Spirit being aspects of one and the same personality; some of them (Patripassians) hold Christ to be God in human form; others view him as a man in intimate union with God. *Arians* hold that the three persons are entirely distinct beings; the Son (or Word) and Holy Spirit, though existing before all time, yet owe their existence to the will of the Father, who alone is the Most High God. *Trinitarians* hold that in the one God there are three personalities, eternally distinct, and all equally divine. *Socinians* hold with Arians that the Father alone is the Most High God: they hold also an Arian view of the Son (though they deny him pre-existence) but take a Sabellian view of the Holy Spirit (interpreting this as divine influence). Bidle, however, in other respects a Socinian, held an Arian view of the Holy Spirit, whom he treated as the first of archangels. It is further distinctive of the Socinian theology that it discards that view of the Atonement according to which Christ suffered 'to reconcile his Father to us' (Anglican Article II.), maintaining that Christ's work operates not on God but on man.]

10. Firmin.

This primary document was not printed till 1708. Meanwhile the term Unitarian had obtained currency through the pious zeal of **Thomas Firmin** (1632–1697), a main promoter of the *Unitarian Tracts*. Firmin, the philanthropic mercer, was (though a comparatively illiterate man) the confidential friend of all the liberal-minded clergy of his day. **John Tillotson**, D.D. (1630–1694),

as Dean of Canterbury, left it to Firmin to find supplies for his London lectureship, when he had to leave town. Firmin had befriended Bidle, and had got him a pension from Cromwell; it was from Bidle that he learned to distrust mere almsgiving, and to attack the causes of social distress by economic effort. Bidle made him permanently heterodox in the article of the Trinity. For a time he adopted Bidle's general type of opinion, including that literally anthropomorphic view of the Divine Being which was then current among Socinians, and was shared with them by Milton. Firmin, however, became a Sabellian under the influence of **Stephen Nye** (1648–1719), a Hertfordshire clergyman, grandson of **Philip Nye** (1596–1672), the Independent.

The first appearance of the name Unitarian in English print is in 1687, in the (anonymous) *Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians*, written by Nye, at Firmin's request. Here Unitarian is introduced as a broad generic term for all who own the Unipersonality of the Supreme Being; it is affirmed that 'both parties (Socinians and Arians) are called Unitarians.' So, in the *Acts of Great Athanasius*, 1690, the reader is invited to distinguish between Arian Unitarians, Bidellian Unitarians, and Socinian Unitarians. The name was at once adopted by **William Freke** (1662–1744), an Arian, whose first pamphlet was burned by the hangman, and its author fined and made to recant on 19th May 1694; and by **Henry Hedworth**, a life-long disciple of Bidle. Firmin never left the communion of the Established Church, interpreting its formularies in a Sabellian sense. At the close of his life, he formed a project of 'Unitarian Congregations,' which, however, were not to be separatist meetings, but 'Fraternities in the Church.' There was no idea of excluding the worship of Christ; for as Bidle worshipped Christ in a Socinian sense, so did Firmin in a Sabellian; and so, later, in an Arian sense, did **Thomas Emlyn** (1663–1741), who published (1706) a *Vindication*

of the Worship of the Lord Jesus Christ on Unitarian Principles.

[Wallace and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Emlyn, Firmin, Freke and Nye; *Christian Life*, 20th August 1892, for Hedworth; 17th September 1892, for Freke.]

11. Consequences of the Toleration Act.

The date (1687) of the appearance of the Unitarian name in English literature marks the brief period during which, by an act of arbitrary power, the profession of Unitarian doctrine was freed from penalty. For it was the year of James II.'s successive declarations (January, 18th March, and 4th April) for liberty of conscience 'to all persons of what persuasion soever' *(Calamy)*. By the Toleration Act (24th May 1689), those who denied the Trinity (in preaching or writing) were, with Roman Catholics, excluded from protection. This exclusion had three consequences, which it may be well to enumerate here, at the risk of some anticipation.

(a) Denied a natural expression and driven inward, the spirit of the excluded sects became a virus, taking morbid forms. Suppressed Romanism permeated the Establishment as a stagnant sacerdotalism. Suppressed Unitarianism turned to a hard and scornful deism. **Thomas Chubb** (1679–1747) was an untaught genius, who 'appears to have been a good deal read in America.' He began as a high Arian and ended as a modified Deist. He could not legally open a meeting for worship; he started a club for religious discussion. Such clubs were not uncommon; they did not contravene the Toleration Act; and the enforced substitution of debate for devotion had its natural consequences. We may trace the same process in the history of other English Deists.

(b) Chubb was all his life a conformist. The temptation to heretical conformity was strong, since there was no legal freedom to be gained by going into Dissent,

and the prosecution of an untolerated dissenter was a much simpler matter than the arraignment of a conformist, however heretical. Emlyn was suffered to gather a little congregation in London, at Cutlers' Hall (1705 to about 1711); but he 'never once' preached his Unitarianism; his theological tracts were anonymous; and the severity of his Dublin sentence (1703) had raised a scandal which no one was anxious to repeat.

(c) Emlyn, while the first minister who publicly took the Unitarian name, yet described himself as 'a true Scriptural Trinitarian' (1708). **Samuel Clarke,** D.D. (1675–1729), followed him by entitling his epoch-making book *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712). The *bona fides* of both men was above suspicion. But their example bred a fashion which tended to become evasive. To avoid an open conflict with the Anglican articles (the standard of belief for all Protestants under the Toleration Act), some men were tempted, first, to stretch a point, and, having gone as far as they could, then to maintain that a piebald theology had this double merit, it was as white as human reason required, yet as dark as the authorities could reasonably demand, thus being a fair scriptural black. Some who had previously adopted the Unitarian name, now avoided it. Stephen Nye, the first publisher of the Unitarian name, dissociated himself from it after Firmin's death, and in his later publications took the line of attacking (from a practically Sabellian standpoint) the Arianising positions of Clarke.

[For the Deists, see Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, 1870-3.]

12. Union of Dissent.

Immediately after the passing of the Toleration Act, the Presbyterians and Congregationals established (1689) a common Fund in the interest of Dissent. Already they had instituted a common Lecture, supported by the London merchants, at Pinners' Hall, on the Indulgence

of 1672. They now agreed to form a united body, dropping their distinctive names; it was, however, a coalition of clergy, not a confederation of churches. This Union, begun in London in 1690, extended to the country, where it endured and spread, though in London it soon dissolved. The London rupture occurred in this way. Among the Congregationals there were much wider extremes of opinion than among the Presbyterians, who maintained a steadier consensus of doctrine. The extreme which first frightened the London Presbyterians was Antinomianism. On the publication (1690) of the posthumous works of **Tobias Crisp,** D.D. (1600–1643), they were attacked as Antinomian by **Daniel Williams,** D.D. (1644–1716), in his *Gospel Truth* (1691). In return, very reckless charges of Socinianism were hurled at Williams, whose orthodoxy was vouched for by Edward Stillingfleet, D.D. (1635–1699), and by Jonathan Edwards, D.D. (1642–1712), the antagonist of Arminians and Socinians. But angry feelings were aroused; the Congregationals started a new Fund (1693); the merchants dismissed Williams from his lecture, and the Presbyterians started a new lectureship, at Salters' Hall (1694). The upshot was that, in the working of the now divided Fund, the Presbyterian Fund favoured ministers of moderate views, while the Congregational Fund gave support to extreme men. Hence, later in the century, when the old names were resumed, they were applied to congregations, irrespective of their history, according to the Fund with which they were connected. We may almost say that the names exchanged their theological significations. Towards the end of the century, Presbyterian meant simply latitude, Congregational or Independent meant doctrinal consensus. This is the precarious ground on which Unitarians claim an English Presbyterian ancestry, though at least half of the old Presbyterian chapels (those of the period 1690–1710) are now in the hands of Congregationalists, and many of

the older Unitarian chapels were erected by Congregationals. To-day the Presbyterian name is little more than a London court-dress, in which Unitarians, since 1836, have enjoyed a privilege of separate access to the throne; and an expression of the undogmatic principle.

[See further on the Union, in appended lecture on Baxter.]

13. Unitarianism among Congregationals.

At the other extreme from Antinomianism there was a certain amount of Unitarianism among the Congregationals. Of this, a remarkable instance is exhibited in **William Manning** (1630–1711), who had been ejected from a Suffolk living by the Uniformity Act (1662), and had established an Independent congregation at Peasenhall. Manning seems to be the only instance of an Ejected Minister who adopted Antitrinitarian views. He became a Socinian in 1690, by reading, with Emlyn, the *Vindication* (1690) of the Trinity, by **William Sherlock,** D.D. (1641–1707). He carried a part of his congregation with him, and tried to convert his friend Emlyn, whom Sherlock's book had made an Arian. The so-called Socinian controversy practically ends in 1708, with the *Socinian Controversy Discussed*, by **Charles Leslie** (1650–1722). Clarke's book (1712) marks the beginning of the so-called Arian controversy; for Emlyn's case, originating in Ireland, interested the public rather as a piece of persecution than as a burning question of theology.

[See Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*; and, for Manning, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

14. Clarke.

Clarke's theology, semi-Arian at the furthest, was much more conservative than Emlyn's; and his temper,

like that of his friend, **Sir Isaac Newton** (1642–1727), who is believed to have gone beyond him in heresy, was extremely cautious. Yet Clarke, in effect, did more than Emlyn to determine the future of Unitarianism; and this because his opinions conflicted with the forms of worship prescribed to him as an Anglican. In Clarke's view, Christ possessed every divine attribute, excepting self-existence. The test question was put to him in 1719 by the Roman Catholic disputant, **Edward Hawarden,** D.D. (1662–1735): 'Can the Father annihilate the Son and the Holy Ghost?' Clarke hesitated, and made no reply. Neither he nor **William Whiston** (1667–1752), who lost his Cambridge chair for Arianism (1710), and ultimately joined the Baptists, wished to abrogate the worship of Christ, but they sought to minimise it. Hence their opponents confronted them with this dilemma: either they broke the first commandment by a tritheism, or the second by an idolatry.

Whiston and Clarke tried their hands at purging the established forms to suit their views. Their example was extensively followed, not only in a long series of published drafts of revised forms (those of **John Jones** (1700–1770), of Alconbury, being the most notable), but even in the public conduct of the services by heretical clergy, whose excisions were ignored by easy-going bishops.

After the publication of *The Case of Arian Subscription* (1721), by **Daniel Waterland,** D.D. (1683–1740), a few, with Clarke and **John Jackson** (1686–1763), declined preferments which involved a renewal of subscription. But a sophistical subscription became deplorably common, on the principles of **Benjamin Hoadly,** D.D. (1676–1761), the great latitudinarian bishop and 'idol of the Whigs.'

[For Newton see Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*; for Clarke, Hoadly, Jackson, and Jones, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

15. Baptists, Friends, and Huguenots.

Unitarian heresy among Dissenters, under the Toleration Act, was in no conflict with forms of worship established by law; and the popular election of ministers gave it local continuance. Yet it was not more widely diffused than in the Establishment, nor did it begin to spread so early. Exception must be made in the case of *(a)* the Baptists and *(b)* the Friends, but the proceedings of these bodies attracted little attention outside their own borders.

(a) In 1700, the General Baptist Assembly, in the case of **Matthew Caffyn** (1628–1714), issued the first formal endorsement of latitudinarian opinions in the article of the Trinity, made by any tolerated section of English Dissent. It led to a split; but the split was healed in 1704, and both parties were in amicable communion till 1770, when the New Connexion was formed by **Dan Taylor** (1738–1816). The only London pulpit opened to Emlyn, excepting his own, was that of a General Baptist church.

Edward Elwall (1676–1744), a Sabbatarian Baptist, was a Unitarian of somewhat Judaic type. He was arraigned for blasphemy (1726), but discharged on a technicality.

(b) Sabellian views were common among Friends from the first. Both by **George Fox** (1624–1691) and by **Robert Barclay** (1648–1690) the term Trinity was discarded, as without Scripture warrant. Among Friends' writings, the posthumous tracts (1726) of **Richard Claridge** (1648–1723) on the Trinity and Atonement merit special notice for their ability and learning. They were edited by **Joseph Besse** (1683–1757), the Quaker historian, and were symptomatic of a strong current of opinion adverse to the doctrines impugned.

A further exception may be found in the case of the Huguenot congregations, French and Walloons

(*i.e.*, French-speaking Flemings). These were not under the Toleration Act, having special terms and conditions of privilege. But at Canterbury, in 1695, a body of Socinian seceders, headed by Jacques Rondeau, formed a separate congregation, which, in 1697, came under the Toleration Act, took the name of the French Uniform Church, and existed till 1745.

[For Caffyn see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, and *Christian Life*, 5th Nov. 1892; for Elwall, *Dict. Nat. Biog.* For early Friends see Storrs Turner, *The Quakers*, 1889; for Barclay's theology see *Theological Review*, July 1875. For Huguenots see *Monthly Repository*, 1810, p. 241.]

16. Baxter and Locke.

Most potent among the influential forces which tended to the progressive liberalising of the old Dissent were the writings of Baxter and Locke. **Richard Baxter** (1615–1691) had often been a marplot to schemes of accommodation, through over-subtlety of conscientious scruple; but he had furnished (in his Worcestershire Agreement of 1652, a movement against Presbyterianism) the model for the clerical unions of Dissent; and his posthumous autobiography (1696), popularised by **Edmund Calamy**, D.D. (1671–1732), in his *Abridgment* (1702; second edition, 1713), included a noble confession of the need for a comprehensive charity.

John Locke (1632–1704), if we estimate him by his principles (to say nothing of his specific opinions, which were not fully known as Antitrinitarian till the publication of extracts from his common-place book in 1829), may pass for the Socinus of his age. There was the same lay disengagement from scholasticism, the same purpose of toleration tempered by prudence, the same interest in the minimising of essentials, and the same recurrence to Scripture, interpreted (that is to say, rationalised) by common sense rather than by profound exegesis.

Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* (1695) owes more than its title to Baxter's

Reasons for the Christian Religion (1667); but in cutting down fundamentals (as Baxter would not have done) to the acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus, Locke follows in the track of the *Leviathan* (1651) by **Thomas Hobbes** (1588–1679), who was more of a Socinian than Locke. This simplification of the Christian basis, adopted from Locke, was accepted with avidity by liberal Dissenters; its central thesis retained with them, up to a very recent period, the position of an undisputed axiom.

Locke's posthumous paraphrases of St. Paul (1705–1707) became the fountain head of that older school of Unitarian hermeneutics, which produced the widely known *Paraphrase* and *Key* (1745) to the Epistle to the Romans by **John Taylor,** D.D. (1694–1761), and culminated in the *Improved Version* of the New Testament (1808), and the annotated translation of St. Paul's *Epistles* (1822), by **Thomas Belsham** (1750–1829).

[On Locke see Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.*; and on Hobbes consult Hunt, *Religious Thought in England.*]

17. Salters' Hall.

The effect of Clarke's book (1712) became visible among the Presbyterians in 1717. In that year the Exeter Assembly (a clerical union formed in 1691, on the London model) censured the licensers of **Hubert Stogdon** (1692–1723), whose Arianism was suspected, and who ultimately became a Baptist. **Luke Langdon,** a candidate for a London charge, was rejected (1717) as an Arian. A part of the congregation seceded in his favour, but he left the ministry. In 1718, **Martin Tomkins** (1682–1755), minister of Stoke Newington, was dismissed for Arianism. Tomkins was sound on the Atonement; his tract (1732) on this topic won the praise of Doddridge. In this he did but follow Clarke, whose

sermons were commended by Dr. Johnson on his deathbed as 'fullest on the propitiatory sacrifice.'

Meanwhile Exeter was aflame with the controversy on the alleged Clarkean heresies of **James Peirce** (1673–1726) and his colleague, Joseph Hallett (1656–1722). The matter came for advice before a meeting of the three denominations (Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist) at Salters' Hall, London, in March, 1719. The meeting divided on the question whether they should first subscribe to prove their orthodoxy, or first give their advice and then declare their orthodoxy. The majority resolved on the latter course; the minority seceded and acted apart. The leader of the Subscribers was **Thomas Bradbury** (1677–1759), a Congregational; the leader of the Nonsubscribers was John Barrington Shute (1678–1734), afterwards **Viscount Barrington,** also a Congregational, and a member of Bradbury's church. Peirce himself was a Congregational, he had been a member (as also was Bradbury) of the Stepney church; his view of ordination, though not Congregational, ran no higher than was allowed by the terms of the London Union. Among the Subscribers were most of the older Presbyterians, including a majority of Dr. Williams' Trustees, four of whom, William Tong (1662–1727), Thomas Reynolds (1667–1727), Jeremiah Smith (1654–1723), and Benjamin Robinson (1666–1724), helped Bradbury by issuing a whip in the Subscribing interest. Among the Nonsubscribers were, with the exception of Thomas Ridgley, D.D. (1667–1734), the ablest of the Congregationals, *viz.*, Moses Lowman (1680–1752), Jeremiah Hunt, D.D. (1678–1744), Nathaniel Lardner, D.D. (1684–1768), and David Jennings, D.D. (1691–1762). Among them were also most of the younger Presbyterians, several of whom soon conformed, while others left the ministry altogether.

Sir Joseph Jekyll (1663–1738) is credited (by Whiston) with the smart saying that 'the Bible carried it

by four,' a witticism which does not state the case very fully. Those who signed the Advices with the Nonsubscribers were seventy-three (including forty-eight Presbyterians and eight Congregationals); those who signed them with the Subscribers were sixty-one (including twenty-three Presbyterians and twenty-five Congregationals.) But the actual Subscribers, including those who did not sign the Advices at all, were seventy-seven (including thirty-one Presbyterians and thirty-one Congregationals). Moreover, the Nonsubscribers sent a letter with their Advices, in which they said they 'utterly disown the Arian doctrine, and sincerely believe the doctrine of the blessed Trinity and the proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The Advices from both parties were practically identical in terms, having indeed been drafted by Barrington before the meeting. They lay down two propositions, remarkable as summarising the most absolute Independency; first, there are doctrinal errors which justify a congregation in renouncing a minister; second, each congregation is to decide for itself what these errors are.

The Salters' Hall decision (in which the dispute as to subscription is a mere episode, however significant) is viewed by Unitarians as the charter of their liberties; and properly so, for while it permitted a Trinitarian congregation to get rid of an Arian minister, it allowed a Unitarian congregation to exercise a like right.

Peirce and Hallett's Mint Meeting at Exeter, opened 1719, was the first place of worship erected for divines of the Clarkean school; it was ranked as Presbyterian in the Fund lists, but Peirce declined any name save Christian. On his death a call was given to Emlyn, which he was too infirm to accept. The minister of Mint Meeting was admitted to the Exeter Assembly in 1753, when the doctrine of the Trinity was made an open question.

[For Salters' Hall see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, under Bradbury and Peirce.]

18. The Liberal Laity.

It would be a mistake, in tracing the development of opinion, to think only of the theological disputes of the clergy. The liberal Dissenting laity were more deeply interested in questions of religious liberty than in any dogmatics. For them were written the *Occasional Papers* (1716–1719), of which the keynote was struck by **Benjamin Grosvenor**, D.D. (1676–1758), in the opening paper on *Bigotry*. They read the *Independent Whig* (from 1719), and the collection of articles by **Thomas Gordon** (d. 1750) reprinted from it under the title *The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy Shaken* (1752). A favourite writer with them was **Edmund Hickeringill** (1631–1708), an eccentric person, who had wandered from sect to sect during the Commonwealth, settling down as an Anglican clergyman at the Restoration, and who condensed religion and duty into the following rhymes:

> By the liturgy learn to pray;
> So pray and praise God every day.
> The Apostles' Creed believe also;
> Do as you would be done unto.
> Sacraments take as well as you can;
> This is the whole duty of man.

From Hickeringill's *History of Priestcraft* (1705–1706, re-issued 1721), and from the writings of the Deists, they learned something of a biblical criticism, smart if crude, which charged the Bible with errors, and prepared the way for a revision of the foundations.

[*Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Gordon, Grosvenor and Hickeringill.]

19. Dissenting Academies; Grove and Doddridge.

The Dissenting academies began as early as 1670, with the Northern Academy for 'university learning,' maintained by **Richard Frankland**, M.A. (1630–1698), from whom Manchester College derives its lineage. Start-

ing two years before the united lectureship of 1672, and twenty years before the formal unions of Presbyterian and Congregational divines, Frankland, himself a theoretical Presbyterian, from the first received candidates for the Independent ministry, and Anglican laymen, among the alumni of his hospitable academy. His motto, 'Libera terra, liberque animus,' has ever been the watchword of the best Nonconformist training. In the last century, these academies, excellent nurseries of liberal investigation, philosophic theology, and biblical scholarship, equipped the ministry to meet the scepticism of the age with defensive argument and defensive exegesis.

Henry Grove (1684–1738) and **Philip Doddridge,** D.D. (1702–1751), did better. Grove, in his chair at Taunton Academy (from 1706), made a very deep mark on the ministry of the so-called Presbyterian dissent. He taught no heresies; but he illuminated the ethical side of Christianity, and placed its 'reasonableness' in the suasiveness of its perfect moral purity.

Doddridge supplied the unifying element in the controversies of his time, as **Edmund Calamy**, D.D. (1671–1732), had endeavoured to do, in the generation preceding. Trinitarian as he was, with a Sabellian tinge, he had a constant strife with 'orthodoxy'; he is the first to use that term as a by-word. He upheld the evangelical standing of Peirce; and, in another case, declared that he would 'lose his place, and even his life,' sooner than excommunicate 'a real Christian' for Arian proclivities. Separation into congregations of diverse sentiments he thought suicidal; and held that bigotry 'may be attacked by sap, more successfully than by storm.' His academy (from 1729) furnished, not perhaps the most learned, but some of the most catholic-minded and efficient of the liberal Dissenting clergy.

Among them was **Hugh Farmer** (1714–1787) the Independent, whose *Dissertation on Miracles* (1771) was long the evidential text-book of rational Dissenters. As

the champion of the divine sovereignty, he first definitely excluded from the physical world the operation of any other invisible agents. Proclaiming the fixity of natural law, he relied on the divine action for the production of 'new phaenomena' to modify the fatalistic appearance of fixed laws.

[See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Frankland, Grove, Doddridge and Farmer.]

20. John Taylor.

On theological questions distinct from that of the Trinity, a decisive influence was exerted by **John Taylor,** D.D. (1694–1761), through his treatises on *Original Sin* (1740) and the *Atonement* (1751). Between these dates appeared the kindred *Essay on Sacrifices* (1748), published anonymously by **Arthur Ashley Sykes** (1684–1756), an Anglican disciple of Hoadly.

Taylor did not start the 'new light' on these topics, but he brought it to a focus. His books roused theological opinion throughout the British Isles. **Robert Burns** commemorates his influence in Scotland. In Ireland, a worthy minister begged that none of his hearers would read his book on original sin; 'for it is a bad book, and a dangerous book, and an heretical book; and, what is worse than all, the book is unanswerable.' Taylor's Hebrew Concordance (1754–1757) gave him a European repute. He was unquestionably the foremost theologian of the Arian school, and though his tenure of the divinity chair at Warrington Academy (from 1757) was brief, it was remarkable for his insistance upon the freedom of inquiry. Like Peirce he discarded every denominational name except Christian.

[For Taylor see Turner's *Lives of Eminent Unitarians.*]

21. Humanitarians.

Pioneers of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ were **Caleb Fleming**, D.D. (1698–1779), and

Nathaniel Lardner, D.D. (1684–1768), both of them lifelong Independents. Fleming preached the doctrine during his whole ministry (from 1740). At his ordination he declined to make any fuller confession of faith than this, that he believed the New Testament contained a 'revelation worthy of God to give and of man to receive,' and that he would teach it as he should 'from time to time' understand it. Lardner refused ordination, being unwilling to undergo theological examination, and therefore never held pastoral office. He became a humanitarian in 1730, but did not preach this doctrine till 1747, nor publish it till 1759 (and then anonymously), in a *Letter on the Logos*, written in 1730 to 'Papinian,' *i.e.*, Viscount Barrington. Lardner's judgment naturally carried weight, both from the immense patristic knowledge apparent in his *Credibility of the Gospel History* 1727–1757), and from the prevailingly conservative leaning of his cautious conclusions. Lardner affirmed, from inspection of his papers, that **Isaac Watts**, D.D. (1674–1748), was, in his last thoughts, of the same opinion.

Of Presbyterian writers belonging to this school, the most important was **Paul Cardale** (1705–1775), of Evesham, whose anonymous *True Doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ* (1767) was very influential in the Midlands, where consequently the humanitarian doctrine took root earlier than in other parts of the country. **John Seddon** (1719–1769), of Manchester, advocated the doctrine in sermons preached in May-July 1761, but not published till 1793. Priestley tells us that his brethren in the ministry 'all wondered at him.'

A fascinating and influential book by an Anglican layman, the *Light of Nature* (1765–1768), by **Abraham Tucker** (1705–1774), belongs essentially to this school of Christology.

The last of the erudite Clarkeans was **Henry Taylor** (d. 1785), vicar of Portsmouth, author of *The Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai* (1771–1777); he abandoned the vicarious atonement.

[See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Fleming, Lardner and Cardale.]

22. Wesley.

Meanwhile England was experiencing the stirrings of a new religious life, under the missionary zeal of **John Wesley** (1703–1791). If the Methodist movement was disastrous to many of the staid and sleepy congregations of liberal Dissent, that was not Wesley's fault. A Nonconformist on both sides of his ancestry, Wesley never had any quarrel with Dissenters, as such, and least of all with Dissenters who had anticipated him in his protest against Calvinism. He wrote of Serveto as 'a good and holy man,' of Firmin as 'truly pious'; and he bade his converts not desert an Arian ministry for a Calvinistic, since good works are good things, and, for the rest, chaff is better than poison. It had been well if the liberal Dissenters had caught from Wesley some of his enthusiasm. Strange to say, when **Theophilus Lindsey,** M.A. (1723–1808), full of his new Unitarian gospel, gave himself to his parish work at Catterick with fresh fervour and fidelity, his people said that he had turned Methodist. They meant that the man was alive, that the love of souls had awaked within him. Be it never forgotten that Lindsey at Catterick was a pioneer (1764) of the Sunday school movement, on its purely religious side.

23. Priestley.

The hinge between this period and the next is **Joseph Priestley,** LL.D. (1733–1804). The history of his mind carries us step by step from Calvinism to a type of Unitarianism which is marvellous for its frank freedom from prepossession. Starting in life as an Independent, by 1751 he was an Arminian, by 1754 an Arian and a

determinist; before 1758 he had rejected the ideas of atonement, of inspired books, and of any immediate action of God upon the human mind; by 1768, Lardner's *Letter* had convinced him of the simple humanity of Christ; in 1784 he startled his friend Lindsey by rejecting the Virgin birth, and by maintaining that Christ was neither impeccable nor infallible, and in particular that Christ was under illusion respecting demoniacal possession, and had misconceived the import of some of the prophecies. He still, and always, held resolutely to the reality of miracles and their evidential value, especially to the physical fact of the resurrection; and he expected Christ's second coming.

His best and most original work was done in the history of doctrine. His *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ* (1786), the fruit of his controversy with **Samuel Horsley,** LL.D. (1733–1805), was an endeavour to fix the meaning of the New Testament by ascertaining what it meant to the age for which it was written. The end of his investigation was not a mere acquaintance with the speculations of the Fathers; he sought, through their writings, to penetrate to the unsophisticated mind of the common Christian people. Thus, while **Christopher Sand** (1644–1680), in his *Nucleus Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ* (1669) had ransacked the Ante-Nicene period for the footprints of Arianism among the learned, Priestley pursued the same track in search of the vestiges of a primitive humanitarian Christology.

It should be noted, as some have treated his heresies as the outcome of a mind warped by attention to science, that his first chemical experiments were not made till he became a Socinian.

Priestley frankly called himself a Socinian; he did not originally project the formation of a Unitarian sect, and, left to himself, might have preferred for Unitarians the position of a liberal leaven in the churches. He criticised the application to Parliament which resulted

(1779) in the erasure from the Toleration Act of the subscription to the Anglican articles. He thought a subscription no longer enforced was better than the new declaration (of belief that the Scriptures contain the revealed will of God), which might be pressed in the interests of intolerance. He advised Lindsey not to resign his living, but to alter the liturgy, as several clergymen did (*e.g.*, **William Chambers,** D.D., d. 1777), and wait till he was ejected, which he thought unlikely. But when Lindsey (on the failure of the attempt, Feb. 1772, to obtain a relaxation of Anglican subscription) embarked on his new enterprise, Priestley acknowledged his 'better judgment,' and entered warmly into his plans.

[See appended lecture on Priestley; consult also his *Memoirs* (cheap edition, 1893), the essay by Martineau (1833, reprinted 1890) and the addresses by Professor Huxley (1874) and J. E. Thorpe (1874). For Horsley, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

PERIOD III.

24. Lindsey.

William Robertson, D.D. (1705–1783), had preceded Lindsey by resigning his Irish preferments in 1764; and to Robertson, with characteristic modesty, Lindsey always referred as 'the father of Unitarian nonconformity.' He did not re-enter the ministry, and Lindsey was himself the father of Unitarian churchmanship.

The moral effect of Lindsey's resignation of Catterick (1773) was exceedingly great. **Job Orton** (1717–1783) the Independent, an old-fashioned liberal evangelical, quite out of touch with the Priestley school, wrote with enthusiasm of Lindsey as 'a glorious character'; and, while disclaiming sympathy with his opinions, declared that, were he publishing an account of the Ejected Ministers, he would add Lindsey to the list, 'if I brought him in by head and shoulders.'

On Sunday, 17th April 1774, Lindsey opened the first **Unitarian Chapel,** in Essex Street, London. It was a room holding three hundred people, and nearly two hundred were present. **Benjamin Franklin** (1706–1790) was there, with Priestley and other distinguished people (including a lord), the majority being members of the established church. The service-book was reformed on the basis of Clarke's revision; it retained (till 1793) the

Apostles' Creed. This service-book was the pivot of Lindsey's plan.

First, his object was to set up a distinctively Unitarian worship; and by Unitarian in this connection he understood a worship expressly limited to God the Father. He was apparently the very first to confine the term Unitarian to this use, as he was also the first to deny that in Scripture the term God is in any sense applied to Christ. Guaranteeing that the worship should be thus Unitarian, he disclaimed the intention 'ever to treat of controversial matters' from the pulpit, and it was with some difficulty that his friends overcame his reluctance to deviate from his plan of purely practical discourses.

Secondly, his hope was to initiate a Unitarian secession from the Established Church. He had no wish to amalgamate with existing Dissent; hence, though he doffed his surplice, he retained the structure and, as far as possible, the details of Anglican worship. His idea, in short, was to exhibit the model of a reformed English Church. Thus his aim differed from that of previous liturgical experiments among Dissenters; of which the Liverpool Octagon (1763–1776) furnishes the most conspicuous example. Lindsey's expectation was but poorly fulfilled. There was indeed a considerable secession of Cambridge men; including, among others, **John Jebb,** M.D. (1736–1786), **Gilbert Wakefield** (1756–1801), **Edward Evanson** (1731–1805), and **William Frend** (1757–1841). Their services to the movement were of much controversial value; but only **Thomas Fyshe Palmer** (1747–1802) founded a new congregation (at Dundee, 1785); nor did any others devote themselves to the Unitarian ministry, excepting **John Disney,** D.D. (1746–1816), who became Lindsey's colleague and successor; and, at a later date, **Theophilus Browne** (1763–1835). Lindsey opened (27th April 1791) a Unitarian Chapel at Plymouth Dock. He had advanced money towards its erection, but the scheme originated

among Dissenters, the prayer-book was of local manufacture, and the first minister was **John Kentish** (1768–1853), then a student fresh from Daventry. The Unitarian ministry has never been without important recruits from Trinitarian churches; but they have rarely come from the Establishment.

[For Lindsey consult, besides the *Memoirs* by Belsham, 1812 (reprinted 1874), the Autobiography of Catherine Cappe, 1822, Robert Collyer's *Theophilus Lindsey*, and Miss Cooke's *Lindsey and his Friends*. See also *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Browne, Disney, Evanson, Frend, Jebb, Kentish; and Turner's *Lives* or Spears' *Unitarian Worthies*, for Fyshe Palmer, Robertson and Wakefield.]

25. Restriction of the Unitarian Name.

The new restriction of the term Unitarian, to a devotional sense, contributed to the isolation of Lindsey's movement in more ways than one. The doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was proclaimed as the only true Unitarian Christology. An inclusive term, connoting, since its introduction in 1682, all believers in the Unipersonality of the Godhead, was pressed in 1774 as a sectional name.

Arians complained that it was sought to rob them of a title to which they had rendered distinction, and which had always been theirs. It was grudgingly allowed to some of them, on proof that they did not worship Christ; the reluctance being the less called for, inasmuch as the public worship of Christ by Arian Dissenters was at this time almost unknown; perhaps the last to retain it (at the communion) was **Micaijah Towgood** (1700–1792). And Belsham allows the Unitarian name to Lindsey's great convert, the **Duke of Grafton** (1735–1811), who, while restricting 'divine worship' to the Father, yet held that 'Jesus Christ in his present state can hear and help us.'

Against Arianism, as against Trinitarianism, a contest was waged, with equal aggressiveness and with better opportunities. Liberal Dissent was weakened, quite as much as the particular cause was advanced. It was

thought good policy to place a Unitarian Chapel of the new sort in competition with a meeting-house, Unitarian already, in the older sense. Of these efforts, the only one that lived was Mosley Street (now Upper Brook Street), Manchester (1789).

26. Belsham.

In 1788, **Thomas Belsham** (1750–1829) left the Independents to join the movement, which secured a divinity chair by his appointment (1789) as theological tutor in the short-lived Hackney College (1786–1796). He educated **Charles Wellbeloved** (1769–1858), who for thirty-seven years (from 1803) was theological tutor at Manchester College, York. Without the genius and the transparent lucidity of Priestley, Belsham was a man of massive powers and commanding style. Late in life (1821) he took up a position well in advance of most of his co-religionists, by rejecting the Mosaic account of creation as irreconcilable with science. He had already (1807) drawn attention to the composite character of the Pentateuch.

[See Williams' *Memoirs* of Belsham, also Spears' *Unitarian Worthies*, and *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

27. The Unitarian Societies.

Early in 1791 was founded the Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which followed the lines of an earlier (1783) society, without denominational name. Belsham drew the preamble, meant to exclude Arians and to stigmatise the worship of Christ as 'idolatrous.' Disney and **Michael Dodson** (1732–1799) pleaded in vain for comprehension; **Richard Price**, D.D. (1723–1791), the most distinguished of London Arians, sent in his guinea, saying that he could not allow a Unitarian Society to exist without his name. But the provincial Unitarian Societies pursued the exclusive

policy, excepting the Southern Unitarian Society (1801), founded by **Joshua Toulmin**, D.D. (1740–1815), and **Robert Aspland** (1782–1845), both Baptists. It took **Lant Carpenter**, LL.D. (1780–1840), twenty years (1811–1831) to get 'idolatrous' and 'mere man' struck from the preamble of the Western Unitarian Society, founded by **Timothy Kenrick** (1759–1804); the 'exclusive worship' of the Father was still retained.

[See Lindsey's *Memoirs*, Aspland's *Memoirs*, and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Carpenter, Dodson, Kenrick and Price.]

28. Birmingham Riots.

On 14th July, 1791, the Birmingham Riots began. They were attended by the usual results of such persecution, great personal sympathy shown to the sufferers, and much additional odium attached to their opinions. After a sojourn at Hackney (1791–1794), where he succeeded Price as co-pastor, Priestley withdrew to America, urged by his spirited wife to try 'a fresh soil.' All his first-rate work was now done; but in Pennsylvania he crowned his theology by adopting the belief in universal restoration.

[For the Birmingham Riots consult Priestley's *Appeals to the Public*, 1791; and the *Narrative* by William Hutton, in his *Life*, 1816.]

29. Paine.

In 1794 appeared the *Age of Reason*, by **Thomas Paine** (1737–1809). This masculine treatise exercised a deeper influence on the Unitarian laity than is generally recognised. It is often said that Bishop Watson answered it; he seems not even to have read it; he answered the *Second Part* (1795), a different matter. The importance of the *Age of Reason* was shown by the answers it received from Unitarian scholars of the calibre of Priestley, Wakefield and **Thomas Dix Hincks**, LL.D. (1767–1857); its vogue, by the quantity of Unitarian sermons of which it furnished the topic. Paine's later

writings show that he was driven from some of his original positions; in 1807 he ventured on the expedient of denying altogether the real existence of Jesus Christ.

From this time, the pulpit had to meet doubts of the miraculous origin of Christianity arising among the Unitarian laity. The first, and long the solitary, instance of the rejection of miracle by a Unitarian minister was in 1797, when **Thomas Martin** (*fl.* 1792–1814) resigned his co-pastorship at Great Yarmouth, in a remarkable *Letter*. Of lay publications in this sense, the earliest, and not the least impressive, is *Apeleutherus* (1799) by **William Sturch** (1753–1838), an original member of Essex Street congregation.

[For Paine see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

30. Periodicals.

Priestley had published a *Theological Repository* at intervals between 1769 and 1788; and there was a mild liberal organ, the *Protestant Dissenter's Magazine* (1794–1799); but there was no regular Unitarian periodical till Robert Aspland, in 1806, established the *Monthly Repository*, on the cessation of a Universalist magazine, edited (1797–1805), under various titles, by **William Vidler** (1758–1816). Along with the *Monthly Repository* from 1815, and as its Unitarian successor from 1834, Aspland also edited the *Christian Reformer*, which was continued (1845–1863) by his son Robert Brook Aspland (1805–1869). The *Christian Pioneer* (1826–45) and *Christian Pilot* (1849–51) were edited by **George Harris** (1794–1859). Of later magazines, the most important was the *Prospective Review* (1845–1854), which was a continuation of the *Christian Teacher* (1835–1844), and, under the joint editorship of **John James Tayler** (1797–1869), **Charles Wicksteed**, B.A. (1810–1885), **James Martineau**, D.D. (b. 1805), and **John Hamilton Thom** (1808–1894), reached the high

watermark of Unitarian journalism; it had a successor in the *National Review* (1855–1864). Next in importance was the *Theological Review* (1864–1879), edited by **Charles Beard,** LL.D. (1827–1888). The *Inquirer* newspaper was established in 1842; the *Christian Life* in 1876; with the latter is incorporated the *Unitarian Herald* (1861–1889).

31. Unitarian Fund and Missions.

In 1806 was also established the Unitarian Fund, a mission society, with Aspland as its secretary, and **Richard Wright** (1764–1836) as its first itinerant missionary, a man of real pith and popular power, who carried Unitarian doctrine from Land's End to John o'Groats, and stimulated lay preaching.

The missionary spirit, thus generated, was sustained by the remarkable eloquence of **George Harris** (1794–1859), whose best work was done in Scotland, where, and in the north of England, his enthusiasm communicated itself to those about him, many of them men of subsequent mark in the ministry.

Outside the Unitarian body, parallel movements added strength to the cause. In 1806, **Joseph Cooke,** (1775–1811), of Rochdale, was expelled from the Wesleyan ministry for heresy; the result was the formation of several Lancashire congregations, long known as Methodist Unitarians. This has been called the first doctrinal secession from Methodism; but in 1789 there was an earlier secession in Manchester, headed by John Laycock, whose street-preaching of Unitarian doctrine attracted the notice of Priestley. The Rochdale seceders were brought into relations with the Unitarian body by **John Thomson,** M.D. (1783–1818), the founder (1816) of the Unitarian Fellowship Funds for mission purposes.

A later secession, following the expulsion (1841) of **Joseph Barker** (1806–1875) from the Methodist New

Connexion, originated several congregations in the North of England. Barker, to whom the Unitarians, headed by **Sir John Bowring** (1792–1872), gave a printing press (1846), was a pioneer of cheap literature; his eightpenny volumes sowed the works of Channing broadcast.

[See Wright's *Missionary Life and Labours*, 1824; J. Gordon's memoir of Harris, in *Christian Reformer*, 1860; Ashworth's *Rise and Progress of Unitarian Doctrine*, 1817; *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Barker.]

32. Legalising of Unitarianism.

Till 21st July 1813, the profession of Unitarianism was punishable in England by forfeiture of citizenship and by imprisonment, while in Scotland it was a capital crime. **Charles James Fox** (1749–1806), the Whig leader, had vainly endeavoured (1792) to procure the repeal of the persecuting Acts; this was accomplished by **William Smith** (1756–1835), M.P. for Norwich, the grandfather of **Florence Nightingale** (b. 1820).

Unitarians now (1813) had civil rights; and in 1819 the Unitarian Association was founded to maintain them against assailants, as well as to promote the reform of the marriage law, and the removal of the Test Acts.

In 1825, this association was amalgamated with the Unitarian Society and the Unitarian Fund, as the **British and Foreign Unitarian Association,** with a preamble, which specifies simply 'the principles of Unitarian Christianity,' leaving their application to individual discretion. A proposal (1866) for a closer definition, by **Samuel Bache** (1804–1876), was met by carrying the previous question.

[For Smith, see Spears' *Unit. Worthies*; for Bache, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*]

33. Channing, Tuckerman, and Rammohun Roy.

By 1825, the influence of the writings of **William Ellery Channing,** D.D. (1780–1842), had begun to tell decisively on the minds of English Unitarians. The

spiritual philosophy, which he had learned from Price, was welcomed from his suasive lips, though, as enunciated by English Arians, it had been rejected in favour of the so-called materialism of Priestley and Belsham. His golden dictum, 'all minds are of one family,' reduced the question of the superhuman rank of Christ to a technicality; while his conception of miracle, as the highest illustration of the dominance of mind over matter, stayed the crude scepticism which the ordinary treatment of the evidences had induced.

Almost as great, though in another way, was the influence of the work of **Joseph Tuckerman,** D.D. (1778–1840), dating from his English visit in 1833. In that year, the Manchester Domestic Mission was founded, followed by those of London (1835), Liverpool (1836), and others. Moreover, it was Tuckerman who roused the spirit of philanthropy in the heart of **Mary Carpenter** (1807–1877), as it was the contact, in 1833, with **Rammohun Roy** (1780–1833) which turned her beneficent energies in the direction of India.

[See Life of Channing, centennial edition, 1880; Life of Mary Carpenter, 1878; Spears' *Unit. Worthies* for Tuckerman and Rammohun Roy.]

34. Arianism.

No party organizations were effected by the Arian section. In 1789, an abortive effort for concerted action was made by **Hugh Worthington** (1752–1813), the eloquent preacher at Salters' Hall. The Arians were averse to controversy, as accentuating their own minor differences; and their congregations disliked doctrinal preaching. In Lancashire, Arianism held the field till the death of **Thomas Barnes,** D.D. (1747–1810), the first theological tutor (1786–1798), in the Manchester Academy; later it was powerful in the West of England. A monthly periodical, the *Christian Moderator* (1826–1828), was started in London, with Irish support, in the

Arian interest, its chief English writer being **John Kitcat,** minister (1805–1827) at Newbury. Probably the last English Unitarian minister who advocated this type of doctrine was **Joseph Calrow Means** (1801–1879), a General Baptist. The Arian laity were in part absorbed by the Lindsey movement, in larger part they fell away to other denominations; those who, among English Unitarians, still hold this view are few and scattered.

35. Controversies.

Among the denominational polemics most memorable for ability and breadth may be mentioned the controversy in Glasgow, between **James Yates,** M.A. (1789–1871), and **Robert Wardlaw,** D.D. (1779–1853), which produced Yates' *Vindication of Unitarianism* (1815; fourth edition, 1850); the Manchester lectures, *Evangelical Christianity* (1813), by **John Grundy** (1782–1843); the York controversy (1823–1824), between **Charles Wellbeloved** (1769–1858), and **Francis Wrangham,** D.D. (1769–1842); and the *Unitarian Discussion* in Belfast between **John Scott Porter** (1801–1880), who began his ministry in London, and **Daniel Bagot,** D.D. (d. 1891), remarkable as the only discussion of the kind in which both sides are given in the same publication (1834; fourth edition, 1870). The Liverpool Unitarian controversy, in which **James Martineau, John Hamilton Thom** (1808–1894), and **Henry Giles** (1809–1882) repelled the attack of thirteen clergymen, produced *Unitarianism Defended* (1839), which raised controversial writing on this topic to a higher level of literary expression and intellectual eminence than it had previously attained in Great Britain.

36. Dissenters' Chapels Act.

From literary contests the Unitarians were drawn, first by the Wolverhampton case in 1817, to a struggle

for the tenure of the meeting-houses which had descended to them from the old Dissent. Their chief assailants were the Independents, led by **George Hadfield** (1787–1879), whose *Manchester Socinian Controversy* (1825) was a gage of battle. Several chapels were attacked, and when the Hewley Trust, founded (1705) by **Dame Sarah Hewley,** of York, for 'poor and godly ministers of Christ's holy Gospel,' ministering north of the Trent, was removed from Unitarian management by litigation (1830–1842), it was felt by the legal adviser of the Unitarians, **Edwin Wilkins Field** (1804–1871), that the only remedy was an Act of Parliament. The Dissenters' Chapels Act became law on 19th July 1844. It made retrospective the legalisation of Unitarian doctrine effected in 1813; and it provided that, so far as trusts did not specify doctrines, twenty-five years' tenure was enough to legitimate existing doctrinal usage. The trusts of the old meeting-houses, whether erected by Presbyterians or by Congregationals, were usually free from specific doctrinal provisions. Except as regards endowments, closer doctrinal trusts, whether Trinitarian or Unitarian, are, as a rule, comparatively modern, and they have been disused by Unitarians since 1855.

[See appended lecture on Priestley; Debates on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill, 1844; *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Hadfield, Hewley and Field.]

37. Decline and Revival of Unitarian Zeal.

One effect of this long contest was to check for a time the dogmatic assertiveness of Unitarians. Their studies of history, somewhat rearranged for legal purposes, chiefly by **Joseph Hunter** (1783-1861), convinced them that their true lineage was to be found in Presbyterianism; though the Presbyterian name, towards the close of the last century, was mainly a revival, without much reference to history, as a

protest, first against the Calvinistic doctrine retained by Independents, secondly against the exclusive Unitarianism of the Lindsey movement. A scheme of Presbyterian organization, with a General Assembly and so forth, had been projected (1833) by **James Yates,** M.A.; a magazine, the *English Presbyterian,* was started (1834). But after the old chapels were made safe, the Presbyterian idea was chiefly in evidence when denominational zeal was to be discountenanced.

A noteworthy result of the Dissenters' Chapels Act was the rebuilding of the greater number of the old chapels, either *in situ* or in some improved locality. Some few had been rebuilt shortly before, the first of these being at Bury, Lancashire (1837). The first to be rebuilt in Gothic architecture was at Dukinfield (1840); though an earlier specimen of this architecture is at Upper Brook Street, Manchester (1839).

To replace the lost Hewley Trust, a new endowment, applicable to the same area, and known as the Ministers' Stipends Augmentation Fund was organised (1856) on the initiative of **Christopher Rawdon** (1780–1858); it is not applicable to congregations bound by express doctrinal stipulations (with an exception permitting the requirement of belief of revelation as contained in Scripture). Its operations have been supplemented (1882) by the Sustentation Fund, applicable to the United Kingdom.

In 1853 the Hibbert Trust, founded by deed of 19th July 1847, and originally designated the Antitrinitarian Fund, came into operation. Its object was to improve the status of the Unitarian Ministry. Its founder, **Robert Hibbert,** B.A. (1770–1849), left to the trustees a wide discretion, and the fund has furnished various scholarships and fellowships, has supported (1878–1894) an annual lectureship, known as the Hibbert Lecture, and now maintains (from 1894) a chair of ecclesiastical history at Manchester College, Oxford.

The recurrence of a distinctively Unitarian zeal is largely due to the labours of **John Relly Beard,** D.D. (1800–1876), founder (1854) of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board (College since 1889), with the co-operation of **William Gaskell,** M.A. (1805–1884), and the support of laymen of the first culture, such as **Henry Arthur Bright** (1830–1884), author of the *Lay of the Unitarian Church* (1857) and **Samuel Sharpe** (1799–1881), the merits of whose *Translation of the Bible* (1840–1865; last edition 1881), are not superseded by those of the *Revised Version* (1881–85).

[See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for Beard, Bright, Gaskell, Hibbert, Hunter; Spears' *Unit. Worthies* for Rawdon; Clayden's *Memoirs* of Samuel Sharpe, 1883.]

38. Newer Biblical Criticism.

Coincident with the increase of Unitarian zeal was a gradual revolt from the older supernaturalism, stimulated by the writings of **Theodore Parker** (1810–1860); by such works as *The Creed of Christendom* (1851) by **William Rathbone Greg** (1809–1881); and perhaps even more by the publication of *Essays and Reviews* (1861). From this epoch-making book dates the introduction of the newer biblical criticism, originated by continental scholars, as a permanent factor in Anglican theology. Unitarians, it has been said, accepted in an Oxford dress, heresies which had been frowned down in their own household. The removal of Manchester College to Oxford (1889) has established there an independent school of theological preparation, faithful to the enlightened traditions of **Barnes** and **Wellbeloved,** of **John Kenrick** (1788–1877) and **Robert Wallace** (1791–1850), of the saintly **John James Tayler** and the ever-young **James Martineau.**

[See Martineau's *In Memoriam* J. J. Tayler, and *In Memoriam* John Kenrick, reprinted 1890.]

39. Conclusion.

This may well be made the stopping-point; for here we touch questions of modern development which scarcely yet belong to history. It is certainly easier to write of the dead than of the living; and possibly wiser to speak of the past than of the future, to offer the provisional results of research than to hazard the experiments of prediction. Yet one may surely dare to say that a great future lies before those churches which have grouped themselves, since 1882, in a National Conference. Never, perhaps, was purpose in their leading men more earnest, never was munificence more ready to support their efforts.

To save misapprehension, it should be added that the history of Unitarianism in Ireland is a distinct subject of study, running on different lines from the above. That of Wales follows England; the Carmarthen College, in which Unitarians and Independents are trained for the ministry together, is a living representative of the Unions begun in 1690.

BAXTER AS A FOUNDER OF LIBERAL NONCONFORMITY.

Synopsis.

40. Baxter's Personality. 41. Mellowing of his Character. 42. Early Training. 43. Ordination. 44. Nonconforming Puritans. 45. Success at Kidderminster. 46. Baxter and Cromwell. 47. Need of an Ecclesiastical Settlement. 48. The Parliamentary Presbyterianism. 49. Baxter never a Presbyterian. 50. The Worcestershire Agreement. 51. Cromwell's Triers. 52. The New King. 53. Baxter at the Restoration. 54. The Sequestered Clergy. 55. Comparative Statistics. 56. Charles' Olive Branch. 57. Feeling of the Nation. 58. Savoy Conference. 59. Kelyng's Bill. 60. Uniformity. 61. Puritan Objections. 62. Bel and the Dragon. 63. Contrast of England and Spain. 64. Baxter's Farewell to Conformity. 65. Number of the Ejected. 66. Classification of the Ejected. 67. Their Ecclesiastical Politics. 68. They wanted Elbow-room. 69. Baxter against Separation. 70. The Crown and the Commons. 71. Puritan Patriotism. 72. The 'Presbyterian Separation.' 73. The Merchants' Lecture. 74. Fresh Persecution. 75. Liberty of Conscience. 76. Life of the Ejected. 77. Terms of Toleration. 78. Baxter on Essentials. 79. Errors of Rome. 80. Meaning of Toleration. 81. Nonconformist Unions. 82. Catholicism against Parties. 83. Baxter's Calvinism. 84. Theology and Reason. 85. Baxter's Candour. 86. Spirit of the Ejected.

[Two lectures in connection with the summer meeting of University Extension Students, at Oxford, 3rd and 4th August, 1894; printed in the *Christian Life*. November and December, 1894.]

RICHARD BAXTER.

[Born 1615; ordained 1638; at Kidderminster, 1641–43 and 1647–60; framed the Worcestershire Agreement, 1652; rejected Conformity, 1662; accepted Indulgence as a Nonconformist, 1672; qualified as a Protestant Dissenter, 1689; died 1691.]

40. Baxter's Personality.

The industrious author of the 'Sufferings of the Clergy' (1714), speaking of Calamy's 'Account' (1713) of the extruded Nonconformist divines, remarks that Calamy has made Baxter 'the hero of the tragedy,' and that 'the lives of the other ejected ministers are as episodes grafted upon his.' It was a true instinct which led the biographer of the Bartholomean confessors to group their portraits around the central personality of Richard Baxter. Whether for the interest attaching to the man himself, or for the position he held with his contemporaries, or still more, perhaps, for the moral interest and the religious attraction of his example and his writings, Baxter rises unique among the men of his time, a great gaunt figure of independence.

Within a sinewy frame, battered by constant sickness and tortured with incessant quackery, he carries an intellect keen as a lancet, and a heart burning with the evangelist's passion. Zeal is but a tame word for the intense eagerness of his nature. If he seem a restless man, it is because the pain of an ideal unreached stings him to the quick, leaving him not a moment's ease while a single scruple remains unsatisfied, a single act of

devotion incomplete. His ready tongue and facile pen are flexible to his thought, yet too tardy for his wishes. No man is more transparently offered to the gaze of a curious world; for in his writings, while all is argument, all is likewise autobiography. Before us is the very Baxter himself; here are his infirmities, here is his greatness. His undrest style, cumbrous with syllogism almost to a crime, moves at the high speed of his intelligence. He never stops to blot, to piece, to curtail, to enhance, to refine; yet he prints his meaning clear upon the minds he addresses, and when he reaches eloquence, it is the native diction of a soaring and majestic soul.

41. Mellowing of his Character.

The thorny maze of his 'Reliquiæ' (1696) is a living portraiture of the controversies of his age. But to understand its most elevated passages, to know what Baxter grew unto and why, you must read the still quivering pages of that little biography (1681) in which he reveals the gracious image of his Margaret. With a deeply tender pathos he has written the memorial of the delicately nurtured royalist gentlewoman who, in the freshness of her vivid powers, gave her once giddy heart to the outcast invalid of forty-seven, and having married him when his fortunes were at the lowest, identified herself with every interest of his, at first in a trembling diffidence, at length with an angelic courage. He has not told us the whole story; grave friends bade him forbear; for what has a Puritan to do with the sweetness of life's romance? Yet no romance may vie with the simple, half unconscious touches of longing love which at once hallow and humanise his broken record of Margaret's closing days. For nineteen years of his ejection she had been the mellowing influence on his character, and thereby on the whole complexion of his religious speculation. As his affections warmed, the reserves of his theology

melted. Like Wesley, he learned to measure men by their goodness rather than by their orthodoxy. Hence he became, in a real sense, a founder of the liberal traditions of Nonconformity, and it is in this light that I propose to review his public career and his permanent work.

42. Early Training.

Richard Baxter sprang from a family of freeholders, settled within five miles of the picturesque town of Shrewsbury, who had handed down this name of Richard Baxter for at least three generations. The two ancestral Richards had diminished their estate at the gaming table, entangling a respectable patrimony in an accumulation of debts. This is probably the reason why the boy, born in November 1615, under the roof of his mother's father, was allowed, though an only child, to remain there till he was ten years of age. By the time the lad was brought home, his father had earned on somewhat easy terms the title of a Puritan, a Precisian, a Hypocrite, synonymous expressions in the mouths of the Shropshire villagers. His changed deportment was observable in these particulars; he read the Scriptures when others were dancing on the Lord's day; he prayed by a form which he found in his common prayer book; he reproved drunkards and swearers; he set his son to read the historical parts of the Bible; and he now and then quoted Scripture, in regard to the life to come. The historical Scriptures, thus offered to him, laid firm hold of young Richard's mind. So did a whole heap of 'romances, fables, and old tales,' for there was nothing over-strict about his home training. In early years he was committed to the charge of an odd medley of tutors, each of them incompetent, excepting John Owen, master of Wroxeter grammar school; and Owen was a scholar without judg-

ment. Baxter was anxious to proceed to the university. As he says, in his rugged verse:

'My young desire
To academic glory did aspire.'

Owen persuaded him to put himself under a tutor at Ludlow; as he would be the only pupil, it would be better for him than a university. This tutor, Richard Wickstead, used him kindly and supplied him with books, but neither taught nor tried to teach him anything. Somewhat later he was indebted to him for his brief introduction to a Court life. A single month at Whitehall, in his eighteenth year, was all the stay young Baxter would make. With some help from neighbouring divines, Puritan in theology, yet all of them advocates for exact conformity, he plunged deep into metaphysics, mastered all the schoolmen he could get, and, in his own phrase, taught himself to 'anatomise' the subjects of his thought.

43. Ordination.

So sickly a youth was he that, by the time he attained his majority, his friends hardly expected him to live out the year. This condition of his health became with him an overwhelming reason for gaining entrance to the ministry. Feeling that he had but a short while before him, though dreading the consequences of his insufficient apparatus, he seized the first opportunity for qualifying as a preacher. The bishop of Worcester, John Thornborough, gave him orders (1638), when he subscribed without scruple. He was appointed, not to a living, but to the mastership of Dudley school, with licence to preach.

44. Nonconforming Puritans.

Here began his first thorough examination of the position of the nonconforming Puritans, with results that

are worth tabling. The form of subscription he found he could not repeat. But of things scrupled by Puritans the only one which he held to be certainly unlawful was the promiscuous giving of the Lord's supper. The cross in baptism he thought unlawful, but was not sure; he never used it. The surplice he thought lawful, with some doubts, not enough to make its disuse a point of conscience; though, in fact, he never wore it. Kneeling at the eucharist he thought lawful, but not imperative; he often received thus. About the ring in marriage he had no scruple. Nor had he about the lawfulness either of forms of prayer in general or of the Anglican forms in particular; he often read the common prayer, though he judged it open to much improvement, and preferred free prayer. To all these positions he adhered through life. Nor did he diverge further from the Anglican system in any important point save one, namely, in the demand for the restoration of a more primitive episcopacy, in lieu of the existing diocesan prelacy, which he regarded as subversive of true ecclesiastical discipline. In his own ministry, prior to the Restoration, Baxter never had personal experience of episcopal control. Bridgnorth, where he held his first curacy (1639–41), was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, excepting the archbishop's triennial visitation. At Kidderminster he did not settle in his lectureship till April 1641; and from this time till the Restoration episcopal authority was in abeyance.

45. Success at Kidderminster.

He became at Kidderminster the master spirit of the place, the master spirit of the whole country round. It was necessary to line the noble church with five large galleries, in order to accommodate his many hearers. Still do they show his pulpit, discarded from the parish church in 1785, purchased for the Unitarians, and by them preserved with loving care. It is older (1621) than

his ministry, but has a characteristic addition which is his: the carved image of the royal crown, resting on its cushion above the preacher's head.

46. Baxter and Cromwell.

The civil war broke into his labours. For two years (1643–45) he sheltered at Coventry. Here he took the covenant, and gave it to one other person. But he very speedily discovered that he had subscribed under a misapprehension, and heartily repented of having had anything to do with it. It was while here that Cromwell and the officers of his regiment, forming themselves at Cambridge into a gathered church, unanimously called him to be their pastor. But Baxter, who was not for gathered churches, sent a reproof in place of an acceptance. Finding afterwards that the war was not for the king against evil counsellors, as he had imagined, but for a commonwealth against the king, he obtained an army chaplaincy, with the express intent 'to save Church and State,' as Cromwell's friends put it. It took two years, of fruitless endeavour, to convince him of his inability to stem the tide of current politics. He returned to Kidderminster (1647) in broken health, to enjoy the sole repose he knew, the repose of anxious, earnest work; this only, while he lived, was his Saint's Rest.

47. Need of an Ecclesiastical Settlement.

And now begins the permanently influential period of Baxter's public career, the period of his constructive dealing with the ecclesiastical situation. Hitherto he had been the disputant against sectaries of all sorts. A typical illustration of his prowess in that line is the famous discussion at Amersham (October, 1645) against a host of sectaries and soldiers, and in presence of a crowded congregation. 'I took the reading-pew, and

Pitchford's cornet and troopers took the gallery.' The Anabaptist leader, who apparently occupied the pulpit, began, and afterwards Pitchford's soldiers set in, Baxter alone disputing against them all from morning till almost night. 'For I knew their trick, that if I had but gone out first, they would have prated what boasting words they listed when I was gone, and made the people believe that they had baffled me, or got the best; therefore I stayed it out till they first rose and went away.' Such scenes were often repeated, and they furnished the best of all proofs of the urgent need for an ecclesiastical settlement. But what was the settlement to be?

48. The Parliamentary Presbyterianism.

In 1641 the main body of the English Puritans had been willing to compose their differences with the bishops by retaining a modified episcopacy, as presented in the scheme of Archbishop Ussher, of which more anon. That this accommodation failed, though it had the countenance of the House of Lords, was due to the opposition of the Court, and of a section of the hierarchy who preferred chaos to concession. In 1646, Parliament made an attempt to end chaos, by promoting, for political reasons connected with the Scottish alliance, the reorganisation of the national establishment on a Presbyterian basis of its own device, differing at once from the older English Presbyterianism and from the Scottish model.

In the old English Presbyterian theory, the theory of Travers, Cartwright, and Bradshaw, no jurisdiction was admitted beyond that inherent in the presbytery of the particular congregation (kirk-session, the Scots call it), subject only to the prerogative of the Crown. Classes and Synods were purely advisory bodies. Under the Scottish model equal representation was accorded in theory to the clerical and the lay element in all superior

church courts, and from the supreme church court there was no appeal. But the English Parliament gave a largely preponderant representation to the lay eldership in every church court, nominated a proportion of the members (following the precedent of the *congé d'élire*), and constituted itself a final court of appeal. The minutes of the Manchester Classis are accessible in print; they show that at every meeting of that body the laity considerably outnumbered the clergy. Hence the Parliamentary Presbyterianism was never popular with the clergy. The Westminster Assembly, which had been sitting from 1643, was in the main for Ussher's system, if that could be had; and for the Scottish system as the next best thing in the circumstances. It protested and petitioned against the action of Parliament, as 'virtually superseding the Synod.' The petition was voted to be a breach of privilege. The Parliamentary establishment was never carried out in its integrity as a national institution. In spite of the general Ordinances in its favour, it was a quasi-voluntary system; that is to say, it was settled in those counties that petitioned for it; when thus settled, it had jurisdiction. There was never a General Assembly; there were Provincial Assemblies only in Lancashire and for a time (till 1655) in London. But about half of the English counties adopted the Parliamentary Presbyterianism, so far as the Classes went, *i.e.*, the courts having jurisdiction over smaller districts. Thus in Essex there were fourteen Classes in operation, but there was no joint action in a Provincial Assembly. Lancashire had its nine Classes, London its twelve, united in its Provincial Assembly.

49. Baxter never a Presbyterian.

Why did not the Parliamentary Presbyterianism prevail in other counties? Because Richard Baxter was never a Presbyterian, of any type; though his enemies

called him one by way of disparagement, and his friends have done the like as a mark of their favour. And because Richard Baxter, in his best days, was a stronger power with the religious people of England than either the Westminster Assembly or the Parliamentary leaders.

50. The Worcestershire Agreement.

In effect, Baxter said: 'The covenant shall not be taken in my county; I mean to organise the religion of Worcestershire.' And he did so. On 22nd December 1652, the Worcestershire petition was his manifesto for the retention of tithe, and of the parochial system. The Worcestershire Agreement, entered into earlier in the same year (May 1652), was based on the rectoral rights of the parish clergyman. It was the clergyman's business to rule his parish, as well as to teach it. He might order his parish on the Presbyterian model, or on the Congregational, or on the old system of churchwardens, which Baxter himself preferred; but this was at the rector's choice, he being the person responsible for these things. The county clergy, Episcopalian, it might be, in theory, Presbyterian, Congregational, even Baptist if they would, were to meet together. There were to be no lay assessors; the clergy, mutually bound by a doctrinal profession, which, so far as it went, was of strict orthodoxy, were to meet for religious exercises and mutual advice, without jurisdiction one over another. I know no previous precedent in England for a mixed organisation of this kind. There was one in Ireland, the Antrim Meeting, established (1626) by John Ridge, vicar of Antrim, an Oxford graduate. And of this Antrim Meeting, a strong Presbyterian witness, John Livingstone, affirms that it was 'sometimes as profitable as either presbyteries or synods.'

Thus Baxter organised Worcestershire. On its northern fringe, there was one good covenanting Presby-

terian (Thomas Hall), who joined the Kenilworth Classis, the representative of the Parliamentary Presbyterianism in the adjoining county of Warwick. Lancashire had adopted the Parliamentary Presbyterianism in 1647, though there were some Congregationals, as at Gorton, Birch, Altham, who would not fall in with it. Cheshire had put forth, in 1641, a protest against the coming Presbyterianism, of which there were rumours in the air. In 1648, Cheshire issued an attestation, signed by fifty-nine of its clergy, who feared the Independent principle of toleration, and dreaded the Independent drift towards heresy. Yet Cheshire never had anything to do with the Parliamentary Presbyterianism. Immediately on the publication of the terms of the Worcestershire Agreement (1653), Cheshire followed Baxter (October 1653). under the leadership of Adam Martindale. So did Cumberland and Westmoreland, on the other side of Lancashire. Northumberland went with the Parliament, as did Derbyshire, on the off-side of Cheshire. All over England, we find contiguous counties religiously organised, here on the Parliamentary, there on the Baxter model. And it was the Baxter model which gained ground. Norfolk, Essex, and Devonshire, for example, began with the Parliamentary system, and, after trying it, came over to Baxter. The South of Ireland, which had resisted Presbyterianism, fell into line with the Baxterian principle of association in 1655.

51. Cromwell's Triers.

Ay, and before that date Cromwell had fallen very much into line with Baxter's principle of association. For Cromwell's Triers (1654), whose work is highly commended by Baxter, though he disowned their authority, were selected on Baxter's plan of Union. Most of them were clergy, and clergy of as many denominations as would consent to act. Presbyterian, Congregational, Anabaptist, all were represented. And they 'admitted,' says Baxter, 'of all that were able and serious preachers, and lived a godly and sober life, of what tolerable opinion soever they were.' On three occasions only did Baxter give certificates on which the Triers for Worcestershire acted; and this was to secure approval for three Episcopalian and Royalist divines. Once admitted on the approval of the Triers, the clergy held rectoral rights in their parishes. If they connected themselves with any outside ecclesiastical organisation, it was purely at their own choice.

Hence the power of the Parliamentary Presbyterianism was broken. Even in Lancashire, there was a movement (1659) for union with Independents, a movement fostered by Henry Newcome, who, before becoming a Lancashire Presbyterian, had been a hearty member of the Cheshire Baxterian association. It came to nothing, because Newcome and his Presbyterian friends were bent on restoring the monarchy; whereupon the Independents, who saw clearly what this would mean, held aloof. Baxter also saw what the Restoration would mean. 'Yet,' said he, 'I am for restoring the King; that when we are silenced, and our ministry at an end, and some of us lie in prison, we may in that condition have peace of conscience in the discharge of our duty, and faith, patience, and charity in our sufferings.'

52. The New King.

In truth, the motive of the Civil War, the motive of the Caroline Restoration, was one and the same. A free Parliament, a constitutional government under a constitutional governor, that was the grand necessity in both cases. The new king turned out an unexpectedly serviceable person. His father had been a peril to the State, alike living and dead. Despairing of any other remedy for an incurable disease, Cromwell decapitated

him. His lying thus stopped, his legend began. It was found that the worst possible use to which a Stuart could be put was to make him a martyr. Supple to the Commons, the second Charles, by his mode of life, extinguished forever in this country the fatuous notion of the royal Claudius that 'divinity doth hedge a king.'

From Breda, on 4th April 1660, Charles issued a declaration, proclaiming 'a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion, in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom.' He pledged his royal assent to any Act, on these lines, which should be passed in a free Parliament. Baxter understood this promise rightly enough, as 'but a profession of his readiness to consent to any Act which the Parliament should offer.' Others reading it in blind haste, recalled it in after years with the bitterness of disappointed hopes. In reality, it was all that the constitutional Puritans could ask of a monarch, or desire at his hands; for the present, a religious amnesty, for the future, a constitutional settlement. When the deputation of preachers at Breda (Baxter was not one of them) further pressed the king to discard the use of prayer-book and surplice in the Royal Chapel, Charles told them, with justice and dignity, that, 'whilst he gave them liberty, he would not have his own taken from him.'

53. Baxter at the Restoration.

With the return of the monarchy came the return of sequestered clergy, smarting under the sense of their grievances. Baxter's own situation was peculiar. In 1641, George Dance, vicar of Kidderminster since 1627, had avoided sequestration by giving a bond of £500 to pay £60 a year for a lecturer, and Baxter was chosen to the post. The living was sequestered in 1647, after which Baxter was paid £90 and the rent of his lodging,

and got two assistants. He declined any position except the lectureship; but some years later, and without his knowledge, he was made the nominal holder of the living. Dance always retained the vicarage house and got his fifths. By an Act of the Convention Parliament (September 1660) the titles of all intruded incumbents were expressly made good, provided that the previous incumbent was dead or had resigned. This was not the case at Kidderminster; Dance was re-instated (he held the living till his death in 1677) and Baxter lost his lectureship.

In one of the few passages of his autobiography which disclose a vein of humour, Baxter narrates the fruitless issue of his plea for a continuance at Kidderminster in some post or other; as vicar, Dance being otherwise provided for; as lecturer, at a nominal sum; well then, as Dance's curate without pay. All parties were eager to accommodate him; no one was able to bring it about. 'And should not a man,' he exclaims at length, 'be content without a vicarage or a curateship, when it is not in the power of the King and the Lord Chancellor to procure it for him, when they so vehemently desire it? But O, thought I, how much better a life do poor men live who speak as they think, and do as they profess.'

54. The Sequestered Clergy.

It is a favourite device of church historians to plead the sequestrations of the twenty years preceding the Restoration as fairly accounting for the subsequent ejections. I do not dwell upon the fact that of the sequestered clergy many were obviously unfit, and many were pluralists. For I hold with Calamy that 'he that should undertake to justify what either the Parliamentarians did against the Episcopalians . . or the Episcopal men did against the Dissenters . . would . . have an hard task of it, and come off but poorly.'

Yet I cannot help observing that this policy of ejection was long anterior to the rise of the Puritan supremacy. It was not initiated by the Ordinances of the Long Parliament. It was taught and practised by the High Commission, by the Star Chamber, and above all by Archbishop Laud. Further to quote Calamy again, 'As for those that were dispossessed of their benefices by violence, plundered and sequestered, it was in a time of war and confusion. Whereas the sufferings of Nonconformists were in a time of peace, after the most solemn assurances that all things past should be forgotten.'

55. Comparative Statistics.

A point, however, is sought to be made of the alleged fact of the larger number of the sequestered, as compared with the ejected clergy. Walker has carefully collected the names of clerical sufferers during the 'rebellion.' Let us see what their numbers amount to in a given district. The first fatal shot in the Civil War was fired at Manchester on 15th July 1642; the final triumph of Cromwell after his crushing victory at Preston, was the surrender of the Scottish army at Warrington, in September 1648. Eleven years later, the pioneer movement of the Restoration was the royalist rising in Cheshire, under Booth, the Puritan magnate. Foremost then in action, earliest in reaction, were the Puritans in the district formed of the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire, united at the Reformation to constitute (1541) the new diocese of Chester; a district by modern Unitarians once more treated for their ecclesiastical purposes as a single province.

Now the statistics for this district are as follows:—(*a*) Of the cathedral dignitaries of Chester, nine, including the bishop, were dispossessed; possibly also some petty canons, of whom there is no record. One of those nine was transferred to a rich living, became a

member of the Westminster Assembly, and was a Trier under Cromwell. Three lived to be restored. (*b*) In the county of Chester, nineteen incumbents were sequestered, add three doubtful cases, thus making twenty-two. Seven of these lived to be restored, and one was made a bishop. (*c*) In the county of Lancaster, fourteen were sequestered, add one doubtful case, and say fifteen. One of these was a bishop already, and retained his diocese (Sodor and Man); another received other livings, and ultimately became a bishop; three more lived to be restored, and of these also one became a bishop. The total number, then, of sequestrations in the district was 46, counting the four doubtful cases. Let us be liberal, and, throwing-in the six unrecorded petty canons, reach a high-water mark of 52; out of whom 16 retained or regained preferment. But of the Puritan clergy disabled in the same district by the Act of Uniformity, we have the names of 62 for Cheshire alone, and 95 for Lancashire; that is, a total of 157. Of these, in Cheshire 8, in Lancashire 13 (in all 21) by subsequently conforming, recovered their ecclesiastical status.

56. Charles' Olive Branch.

The Convention Parliament was dissolved on December 29th 1660, having made good the Puritan titles as aforesaid, but not having taken any step towards a permanent ecclesiastical settlement. Two months before its dissolution, Charles had issued (25th October 1660) a Declaration from Whitehall embodying a comprehensive scheme of Church order; confirming episcopacy, but enlarging the number of bishops; depriving bishops of arbitrary authority; associating presbyters with them in every official act, including ordination; appointing local synods; leaving all ceremonies optional; abolishing subscription; promising a revision of the prayer-book, and meanwhile making its use discretional; lastly, renewing

the pledge of liberty to tender consciences. It was a document on the well-known lines of Ussher's scheme for church government, which in 1641, as we have seen, had been proffered by a committee of English bishops, had then been accepted by the Puritan leaders, and was now again put forward by them. Passed into law it would, as Marsden well says, have been 'the Magna Charta of the Puritans.' That it was not so, was mainly due to the Puritans themselves. From one point of view, they made the greatest blunder of their history. From another, their failure was the greater opportunity of history: 'God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.'

As an earnest of royal good faith, four of the vacant sees were now offered to Puritan divines, Baxter (Hereford), Calamy (Coventry and Lichfield), Gilpin (Carlisle), and Reynolds (Norwich). Three deaneries were similarly assigned. Reynolds alone accepted. The others resolved to wait till the October Declaration was confirmed by Parliament. In this they were perfectly right; but under Baxter's leadership, the Puritan party proceeded to aggravate the difficulties of passing the Declaration into law, by criticising its provisions to the last detail, both in draft and after publication; and by drawing up schedules of suggested improvements, as if it were a mere Bill in committee, whereas it was an olive branch such as had never been offered to religious parties by any English sovereign. The Puritan divines had not a statesman's head among them. Baxter was their battle-axe; and to Baxter's mettlesome intellect, every point of logic was a point of conscience. The episcopal conservatives, Sheldon and Morley, grasped the situation at once; nothing, they urged, can satisfy these men. On 28th November 1660, the Convention Parliament refused to ratify the Declaration, leaving the whole matter to the issue of the forthcoming general election.

57. Feeling of the Nation.

Meanwhile, two events occurred, which worked strongly upon the feelings of the nation, and decided the temper of the next Parliament. One was the rising of the Fifth Monarchy Men under Venner on Sunday, 6th January 1661. This was a trumpery business, yet it frightened the country with the alarm of a recrudescence of fanatical disorder, and occasioned the proclamation of 10th January against conventicles, defined as meetings for worship on the part of persons 'known as Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchy Men, or some such like appellation.' These were forbidden, except in parochial churches and chapels, or in private houses by persons there inhabiting. Power of search for suspected conventicles was added.

The other event was the king's coronation on St. George's Day, when the nation again ran wild, as at the Restoration itself in the previous year. And there was this new whet for the popular imagination; at the very core of the most impressive of national spectacles, the episcopal order now discharged the venerable function of anointing and crowning the nation's head. 'Angels look down,' wrote a grave divine, William Fuller, afterwards bishop of Lincoln, in words which were solemnly sung in St. Patrick's Cathedral,

> 'Angels look down with joy, to see,
> Like that above, a Monarchie!
> . . . . .
> Angels look down with joy, to see,
> Like that above, an Hierarchie!'

58. Savoy Conference.

On the failure of his October Declaration, Charles fulfilled his promise 'to appoint an equal number of divines of both persuasions, to review' the prayer-book. He convened the Savoy Conference, which got to work

on 15th April and expired on 24th July 1661. The tactics of the bishops were admirable. They proposed nothing, but waited for the Puritan objections to the prayer-book. They saw the various items of scruple accumulating day after day, with a perfect knowledge that this was the way to deepen the public conviction that these were not men who could be satisfied. They drew from Baxter an alternative liturgy, the work of a fortnight spent in his study. And this, forsooth, said they, is to be taken in substitution for the prayers of our fathers and the saints of old, arranged by the confessors and martyrs of our Reformation, and consecrated by immemorial usage. Stout churchman as he was, Dr. Johnson told Hawkins that Baxter's office for the communion was one of the first (*i.e.*, finest) compositions of the ritual kind he had ever seen. But the preparation of a new prayer-book was beyond the terms of the commission; and in yielding to the temptation thus to exhibit his marvellous powers, Baxter was simply giving his cause away.

Hence the new Parliament, when it met on 8th May (the anniversary of the proclamation of the king), did not treat the Savoy deliberations seriously. Neither did it wait to hear the voice of the Convocation, which opened concurrently with the Parliament. To this Convocation both Baxter and Calamy were elected as clerks for the city of London; Sheldon, in the exercise of a discretionary power, passed them by, leaving the city of London unrepresented in Convocation. Striding over Conference and Convocation alike, the House of Commons on 25th June 1661 appointed a committee to bring in a Bill for uniformity.

59. Kelyng's Bill.

The Bill was drafted by Sir John Kelyng, afterwards chief justice; notorious in his earlier life as a brow-

beating advocate, in his later career as an arrogant judge; brought up once before the Commons for imprisoning a jury, and again before the Lords for libelling a peer from the bench. A good churchman, he was not devoid of a certain salutary element of rationalism, for he had the courage to denounce, as 'a mere imposture,' the East Anglian cases of witchcraft, by Baxter devoutly believed in, solemnly tried by Sir Matthew Hale, and issuing in the pitiless execution of aged men and women. In body and substance, the Act of Uniformity, as ultimately passed, is essentially Kelyng's Bill.

But the standard of uniformity adopted was not that originally intended by the Commons. The committee had been instructed to 'make search for the original copy of Edward VI.'s second prayer-book,' the most Protestant of the service books, strongly Protestant in its eucharistic forms, and prohibiting the use of alb, vestment or cope. It was, indeed, the prayer-book prescribed in the former Act of Uniformity (Elizabeth's Act of 1559). The older Puritans had often maintained that it was the only legal standard; that they were prosecuted by bishops and brought before the Star Chamber for not conforming to a later prayer-book, the use of which had never been legalised, but simply imposed on arbitrary authority. If the original copy of Edward VI.'s book could be found, it was to be annexed to the Bill, and made once more the standard of uniformity. It was not found. Probably even a printed copy was not easily procurable. Accordingly there was appended to the Bill a printed copy of the prayer-book of 1604, Elizabeth's prayer-book, with the slight alterations made by James I., after the Hampton Court Conference. This bore none of the Laudian impress of later editions; and from this the Commons struck out two prayers.

60. Uniformity.

Sent to the Upper House on 10th July 1661, the Uniformity Bill was not read there a first time till 14th January 1662. This was due to the prorogation; but, in spite of the frequently expressed impatience of the Commons, the subsequent progress of the Bill was slow. It has been held that the Lords were reluctant to pass the Bill. Doubtless some of them were; but this was not the main reason of the delay. The Lords were determined to wait till Convocation had completed a new revision of the prayer-book, that they might make this new revision, not the old prayer-book, the standard of uniformity. If some of them thought the Commons would not swallow the new book, they were entirely mistaken. Absolute uniformity was far more important in the eyes of the Commons than this prayer-book or that. King Edward's, for choice; Elizabeth's, as that was not forthcoming. Sooner than lose the Bill, let it be the Convocation's book, and have done with it. So the prayer-book, exactly as it had passed the Convocation, was adopted by both Houses without debate. The Commons resolved that they had an inherent right to discuss, if they pleased, the alterations made in Convocation. This right they did not exercise. Even a slip of the pen, detected in the Commons, was not rectified without the express authority of Convocation, when the correction was made with due solemnity by three bishops at the clerk's table in the Lords.

As to the general attitude of the Lords, it is true that on some points they were averse to the stringency of the uniformity insisted on by the Commons. But the firmness of the Commons prevailed; the Lords gave way in every particular. The statement that, after all, the Bill was only carried by six votes, is due to a misapprehension. There was no division at all on any reading of the Bill in either House. Divisions were taken only on amendments in committee. The majority of six carried the resolution against discussing the work of Convocation.

The Act of Uniformity received the Royal Assent on 19th May 1662, and was to take effect on the Feast of St. Bartholomew, a speedy date fixed by the Lords. It anticipated the Michaelmas tithe, and left no time for the new prayer-book to reach most parts of the country, for the book did not in fact issue from the press till a few days before 24th August.

61. Puritan Objections.

The objections of the Puritans to the provisions of the Act may be reduced to these three heads:

(*a*) *Necessity of Episcopal Ordination.* This, for example, was Philip Henry's leading objection; it was the main objection also of Henry Newcome. It did not touch Baxter, who, as we have seen, was episcopally ordained. In Cheshire and Lancashire, George Hall, then bishop of Chester, made the reception of episcopal ordination as obnoxious as possible. Bramhall, the Irish primate, had won many Presbyterians by devising a form for orders in which he simply professed to supply any canonical deficiency. Hall insisted that Puritan incumbents, applying for orders, should set their hands to the words: 'I renounce my pretended letters of ordination.'

(*b*) *Renunciation of the League and Covenant as in itself an unlawful oath.* Let it be remembered that less than twenty years before, this Covenant had been subscribed by whole parishes up and down the country. We speak sometimes of non-subscribing congregations, a meaningless distinction in these days, when no congregations subscribe, although clergymen do. But during the Civil War, congregations did subscribe; and all who had done so were henceforth to be charged with the sin of an unlawful oath. Many, even of those who had taken the Covenant, could not in conscience so describe it.

Baxter, who had resisted the imposition of the Covenant, could not do this.

(*c*) *Subscription of assent and consent to all and everything contained in and prescribed by the new Prayer-book.* This was the objection which, in the controversial literature of that period, we find drawn out in every minute detail, even to the point that the Act compelled men to subscribe to a wrong mode of calculating Easter. Needless to say with what voluminous elaboration Baxter set himself to prove the utter impossibility of forcing his conscience, which had revolted against the old subscription, to accept the new one. One of the most touching things in his account of the parties affected by the Act is his allusion to the Old Conformists, as he calls them; men who had never been Nonconformists in any sense, who had subscribed to the old prayer-book, and were ready to do so again, but who could not subscribe to the new book, and who therefore went out.

62. Bel and the Dragon.

I am afraid it must be admitted that many of the six hundred alterations in the prayer-book were expressly conceived and devised with the express object and determination of keeping the Puritans from subscription. Among these alterations is sometimes reckoned the introduction of Bel and the Dragon as a Scripture lesson; its place was changed, but Bel and the Dragon was in the old lectionary, where it figured as Daniel xiv. The animus of the revision is revealed in the saying reported of Sheldon, 'Now we know their minds, we'll make them all knaves if they conform,' and in the declaration of another dignitary: 'If we had thought so many of them would have conformed, we would have made it straiter.' Did the past history of that fatal day, black already in the annals of Protestantism, suggest no lesson? Ninety

years before, a papal medal had borne the exulting legend: 'Ugonottorum Strages.' Now a cavalier astrologer wrote down in his diary, with a merry smile: 'Exit Jack Presbyter.' Had some prescience of the real issue invaded his complacency, he might have described the rending asunder of the religious life of England in terms of a wiser sadness. For if the sorrows of freedom lay heavy for a season on those outside, it was within the Anglican fold that the burden of evil fell, the weight of evil rested.

63. Contrast of England and Spain.

Uniformity in religion, which in this country was the aim of the Tudors, the ideal of Laud, the vain hope of the Restoration Parliament, was in Spain the accomplished fact of Philip II. And in Spain we may see what would have been, had the dream of uniformity been realised in our land. A solemn office, dignified and impressive, a stagnant clergy, a grave unemotional pulpit, a people divided between the inherited instincts of the devotee and the mere civility of respect for an ancient national institution: such is the religious condition which Anglicans still deem too sacred to be vexed by the intrusion even of their own apostolical grace, in response to native appeal. Whereas in England, so full of importance and vitality are the modern developments of church organisation, that the older history of religion in the land seems almost to belong to another realm than that in which we live. And the body which was to have absorbed the religious life of the nation is simply, as the *Church Times*, 3rd August 1894, has quite correctly called it, 'a great provincial Church.' That this is so is in the first instance due to the men who accepted ejection, rather than surrender themselves to a conformity at once hard and hollow.

64. Baxter's Farewell to Conformity.

Baxter, being unbeneficed, preached his farewell sermon on the 25th May, three months before the doomsday specified in the Act. Among his reasons, one was this, that he would let all ministers in England know in good time whether he meant to conform or not. Had he stayed to the last day, he thought it probable some would have conformed, expecting Baxter to do the like. Baxter's farewell to conformity was, therefore, in the nature of a designed manifesto, a call to his brethren, to which the response was the impressive spectacle of the Bartholomew ejections.

65. Number of the Ejected.

As to the resultant number of the Nonconforming clergy of 1662, we have consecrated the figure of 2000, which Calamy says was 'mentioned from the first.' His own volumes record the names of 2465, including after-conformists. Palmer has added others. Neither Calamy nor Palmer is exhaustive. In every county where the list has been tested by modern research, it has been extended. Thus, in Cheshire, Calamy and Palmer give fifty-two names; Urwick produces authority for sixty-two. For Norfolk and Suffolk, Calamy and Palmer supply one hundred and eighty-two names; Browne, while removing two (one ejected in another county), adds fourteen, on the authority of ecclesiastical registers. On the whole, Oliver Heywood may be right in estimating those permanently disabled by the Act of Uniformity at 2500; while Baxter is probably justified in saying that about 1800 of them entered on active work in the Nonconformist ministry.

66. Classification of the Ejected.

I use the term 'disabled,' for the Nonconformists of 1662 fall into three distinct classes, with some subdivisions, which I here set down, with samples.

(*a*) *Those ousted by the Restoration itself*, as holders of sequestered livings of which the incumbents survived to 1660. (*a*) To this class we have seen that Baxter belonged. Some of these got other livings, and were again ejected under the next head. (*b*) To the same class belonged such as Richard Gilpin (the nominee for the See of Carlisle), though in his case the sequestered incumbent did not claim till 1661.

(*b*) *Those deprived by the Act of Uniformity*, being either (*a*) beneficed clergymen, or (*b*) endowed schoolmasters in 1662. Adam Martindale, Oliver Heywood, and Richard Frankland (whom Manchester College venerates as its founder) are samples of this class, which was far and away the largest. These are the Bartholomeans proper.

(*c*) *Those not ousted from benefices*, since they did not hold any in 1662, being (*a*) discharged lecturers or curates, who, in common with the preceding classes, were disabled from preferment till they conformed; such, for example, were Henry Newcome and Philip Henry. (*b*) In this class Calamy places a few who, like Increase Mather, were already licensed preachers, but not as yet ordained.

In making any controversial use of the somewhat ambiguous term 'ejected,' it is necessary to observe very carefully the distinction of these three classes. The term 'silenced' properly applies to all, at least in the intention of the law, which proposed to prohibit them from any further exercise of their ministry.

67. Their Ecclesiastical Politics.

It may be useful to say a word on the classification of the Ejected (as, with this explanation, I shall now call them) in another respect, namely, with reference to their ecclesiastical position. What were they? Moderate Episcopalians? Presbyterians? Congregationals? The

very few ejected Anabaptists, all of them, I think, ousted at the Restoration, we need not specially deal with.

It is impossible to meet this question intelligently, if we fail to call to mind the previous history of the Puritan party under the Commonwealth, with which I have already attempted to deal. The great point to be remembered is that, as in 1641 the main body of English Puritans was willing to adopt Ussher's scheme of modified Episcopacy, so in 1660 this was the scheme which they themselves put forward as the basis of a national settlement. Accordingly it seems to me vain, in speaking of the Ejected, to attempt to class them denominationally in terms derived from any one of the intermediate series of experiments in church politics. Certainly they did not go out on the ground either of attachment or of antipathy to any theory of church government. Not one of them said, 'I am a Presbyterian, and therefore I cannot conform,' or, 'I am a Congregational, and therefore I cannot conform.' It was not episcopacy which they refused to sanction; it was the setting up of new, arbitrary, and tyrannical terms of episcopalian conformity which excluded them. Had Charles' October Declaration (*i.e.*, Ussher's scheme) been made law, Baxter thought the whole number of Nonconformist divines would not have exceeded three hundred.

68. They wanted Elbow Room.

Neither had they, I believe, the smallest idea of leading any organised revolt against the established order of things. They must not be confounded with the Separatists (who, even during the Commonwealth, stood aloof from any national church) though eventually they had to make common cause with them. They only wanted elbow room. They believed they had Christ's own mandate to preach his Gospel. Suffer them to do this, and they would interfere neither with the hours of

church worship, nor with the organisation of parishes, nor with the duty of every parishioner to communicate at his parish church (unless the corrupt character of the incumbent invalidated to his conscience the ministration of the ordinance). Hence they did not seek to go beyond occasional and subsidiary services, and 'repetitions' on Sunday evenings. Theirs was a home mission, an accessory work for the spiritual benefit of their old flocks. The first exception to this, in London, is only apparent. In 1666, when the city churches were lying in ruins after the Great Fire, the Nonconformists erected temporary wooden preaching places (called tabernacles), in defiance of the law. Thomas Doolittle was bold enough to take the stride from a shed in Bunhill Fields to a permanent brick building in Mugwell Street. This the authorities soon laid hold of, and turned into a Lord Mayor's Chapel.

69. Baxter against Separation.

Baxter himself was especially strong, not only at this period, but all the way along to the passing of the Toleration Act, against the formation of Nonconformist churches. He wished to be allowed to preach, he repudiated the idea of holding any pastoral relation. Even after Toleration he declined any pastorate for himself. He frequented services, and habitually communicated, in the established church. At Kidderminster, where his influence was paramount, he restrained all tendency to secede from the parish church, constantly exhorted to unity, and kept back the start of a Nonconforming congregation for nearly a generation. He held Sheldon's licence to preach in the diocese of London; his wife fitted up for him a meeting-place, and afterwards built him a chapel. Not suffered to use it himself, he made it available, through Tillotson, for the services of the established church. 'Be it by Conformists,' he said,

'or Nonconformists, I rejoice that Christ is preached to the people in that parish.' I shall not affirm that all the Ejected were as free of heart as Baxter, in this instance, showed himself to be. But this I say, as a body of men their first thought was for the welfare, the spiritual welfare, of the church of their fathers, the church of their baptism, the church of the land they loved. It was fresh and fierce persecution which turned them at length from the attitude of auxiliaries, to the position of competitors with the establishment.

70. The Crown and the Commons.

In the administration of the Uniformity Act, four distinct policies were, from time to time, resorted to by the authorities. There was the policy of Indulgence, several times renewed on the part of the Crown. By the Commons recourse was had successively to the policies of Enforcement, Comprehension, Toleration.

Shortly after the coming into effect of the Uniformity Act, namely, on 26th December 1662, Charles issued a declaration of Indulgence, 'so far forth as in us lies, without invading the freedom of Parliament.' The policy of the Uniformity Act had been the policy of Clarendon; that of Indulgence was the policy of Arlington, who died a Papist. And the fear of letting in Popery, by way of an Indulgence, was always present to the Commons. I use the terms Papist and Popery, not because I think them fair, but because I am using the terms of that age; terms, moreover, which present the old religion in the aspect then most feared, the aspect, namely, of a prospective foreign usurpation.

In the following February (1663), the Commons addressed the Crown, absolutely declining to ratify any Indulgence, or to tamper with the Uniformity Act. In subsequent years they proceeded to strengthen the outworks of Uniformity. The Acts against conventicles

(1664, 1670) limited under stringent penalties the attendance at Nonconformist worship to four persons besides those of the same household. The Oxford Act (1665) prohibited residence by Nonconforming ministers within five miles of their old livings or of any corporation, unless, indeed, they took an oath, as some did, to endeavour no alterations in Church or State. Further, the Act enforcing a eucharistic test for public officials was renewed and extended (1673).

In vain did Charles recommend to Parliament (10th February 1668) the policy of a general Toleration. In vain did he set the great seal to an Indulgence (15th March 1672) permitting Nonconformist worship in licensed places. The Lord Keeper, Sir Orlando Bridgeman, is said to have declined to affix the seal to an instrument which contravened the constitution, and it was done by deputy. But the Commons would, on the one hand, permit no dispensing power to mitigate the severity of legislative enactment; on the other hand, they absolutely refused to 'establish schism by a law.'

71. Puritan Patriotism.

The restrictive Acts are sometimes regarded as specimens of merely vindictive legislation. It must not be forgotten that they were partly carried, and wholly maintained, in the teeth of the opposition of the Lords, by help of the strongly Protestant attitude of the Nonconformist representatives in the Commons. The Parliamentary leader of the Nonconformists was William Love, alderman of London, who sat for the City twenty years (1661–1681), and who in 1673, in the debate on the Test Act, declared, in reference to the system of Indulgence, that 'he had rather go without his own desired liberty, than have it in a way destructive of the liberties of his country, and of the Protestant interest,' adding that 'this was the sense of the main body of Dissenters.'

Love's pronouncement deserves careful attention, for more reasons than one. It brings up to the surface that steady and resolute undercurrent of self-sacrificing patriotism, without which, as an overpowering motive, the apparently tame endurance of the ejected and persecuted Puritans would be, as it has often seemed, wholly unaccountable. Why did they never rise in revolt, as their contemporaries evidently lived in continual expectation of seeing them do? I believe the answer is that they had witnessed enough during the Commonwealth of the failure of unconstitutional methods to secure permanent gains of good government. Hence they resolved to rely exclusively on constitutional remedies and bide their time, though the meanwhile was desperately hard and heavy. We may remember Richard Frankland's motto, *Libera terra, liberque animus*. Immediately after Love's speech, the Commons remonstrated with Charles on the subject of his recent Indulgence. Charles broke the seal with his own hand, thus voiding the instrument. On the other hand, the Commons at this time (March 1673) passed a Bill for the relief of Nonconformists, but, as it ignored the Roman Catholic case, it was thrown out in the Lords.

72. The 'Presbyterian Separation.'

However, the Nonconformist clergy had largely availed themselves of the temporary provisions of the abortive Indulgence of 1672; registering themselves, with rare exceptions, under denominational names. Most conspicuous among these exceptions was Baxter, who declined to receive a licence under any designation save that of Nonconformist pure and simple. Some few followed his example. At least one was licensed as an Episcopalian. The far greater number chose Presbyterian as their designation; I find even some Baptists licensed under this title.

From this act of denominational registration Bishop Stillingfleet dates what he calls the 'Presbyterian Separation,' and with some reason. Henceforth a number of the Ejected began to 'gather churches,' just as the Separatists, their old enemies, had done before them. How far they did so we do not certainly know. The example of Baxter would probably restrain many. Philip Henry still abstained from holding services at the usual hours of worship. He and his friends were still merely lecturers, not pastors of separated flocks. In Manchester, under the Indulgence, the Nonconformist divines began (29th October 1672), to perpetuate the succession of their ministry by ordination, which, more than any other measure, looks like the formation of a separate communion. Baxter, of course, took no part in any such step; nor had he ever had any hand in ordaining any. Such ordination he held to be valid, and in extraordinary cases justifiable; but it was irregular, since to ordain belonged properly to the bishop, with or without the conjunction of presbyters. On this last point he would not speak confidently. The Anglican ritual, it may be observed, prescribes the conjunction of presbyters in the act of manual imposition; though in practice this important rubric seems neglected, thus discrediting Anglican ordination in the eyes of a strict Presbyterian.

73. The Merchants' Lecture.

A noteworthy consequence of the acceptance of Indulgence was the establishment (November 1672) of the London Merchants' Lecture at Pinners' Hall. Its projectors were laymen, and it offered a common pulpit to leading divines both of the Ejected and of the older Separatist party. In this joint lectureship Baxter gladly took his part. It fell in with the spirit of the appeal he had made in 1668 to John Owen to bear a share in promoting a practical concord and communion between

theoretical Presbyterians and theoretical Independents. Unfortunately, Baxter's tenure of the lectureship was not a success in the direction of his wishes. His subtle examination of points of difference excited the temper of debate rather than of forbearance; while the mediating attitude of his own theology struck opponents as incompatible with soundness. Popery was the bugbear of the time, and some of the zealots for hyper-Calvinism called out that, by the moderation of his sentiments in regard to the freedom and power of the human will, Baxter had 'done more to strengthen Popery than any Papists.'

74. Fresh Persecution.

That, in proposing his measures of Indulgence, Charles at any rate had the interests of Popery at heart was made plain by his action in 1681. A Bill for Comprehension of Nonconformists had got into committee in the Commons (18th November 1680), but was rejected. Thereupon a Bill for relief of Protestant Dissenters from penalties intended for Popish recusants passed both Houses, and was expected to receive the Royal Assent. But on 14th January 1681 Charles prorogued Parliament without taking any notice of this Bill.

The five following years covered the sorest period of suffering which the Ejected were called to experience. The feeling of the Commons had turned; but justices looked for their cue, not to the Commons, but to the Court. The repressive laws were put in force with added severity, and with a malignant barbarism which culminated in the baiting of Baxter by Jeffreys in May 1685, followed by his eighteen months' incarceration. It would seem that both Charles and James now fostered the persecution of Nonconformists, in the expectation that they might ask, or Parliament offer, a toleration inclusive of Papists.

75. Liberty of Conscience.

It is not quite easy to see the ground of principle on which many of those who had availed themselves of the Indulgence of Charles, repudiated altogether James' subsequent claim (1687) to the exercise of dispensing power. James' determination to find elbow-room, and a little more, for Popery was certainly far more pronounced than anything that could be deduced from Charles' action, save in the way of obvious inference. James proclaimed an unconditional liberty of conscience, and a suspension of all penal laws in matter of religion. And, in the interim, the alleged Popish plot had stimulated the anti-Popery feeling of England to fanatical fury.

There were Nonconformists, indeed, who saw no new principle involved in the measures of James, as compared with those of Charles. Oliver Heywood, who seems really to have understood what Toleration meant, and had no fears about it, thought that the opening of meeting-houses by Roman Catholics would do nothing but good in the long run, though for the moment some weak heads might be taken by their 'fopperies,' as he called them. This was certainly not Baxter's view. The national sentiment, however, was roused against the Declaration, not by the holding aloof of the majority of Nonconformists, but by the action of the seven bishops.

76. Life of the Ejected.

What was the life of the Ejected during their period of Paradise Lost, between the Uniformity Act and the legalised Toleration of 1689? How did they live? Some of them quitted the ministry altogether, going into trade, medicine, or law. Those who continued their vocation as preachers had to suffer every conceivable species of hardship. Unless they had private fortunes, which was not the case with many, they existed in a

condition so precarious that, especially in country districts, they were constantly on the margin of destitution. Royal bounty was extended to them. Charles gave privately sums amounting to a thousand guineas at a time, for distribution through the London brethren. Let it be said to his honour, for it meant much more from a thriftless king than the easy flinging of places to his favourites. Funds were raised also among the wealthy Nonconformist laity, but these were soon spent. Preachers got customary doles from their hearers, a most uncertain provision for immediate necessities; these were not days of stipulated salaries, however moderate. Baxter fared better than most, and had no family to provide for. In June 1670, he received, through Lauderdale, an offer of preferment in Scotland; a bishopric, the headship of a college, or a living, at his option. I do not know a letter more perfect in its courteous dignity than the one in which he declines this overture, and simply asks 'the liberty every beggar hath, to travel from town to town,' and 'leave to preach for nothing, and that only where there is a notorious necessity.' In 1672 he rejected a pension. Yet after his wife's death he was often in pitiful straits. It is impossible to read any Nonconformist clerical diary of that age without admiring the faith of men who had to plod their way from shilling to shilling, from bag of corn to bag of peas, the wolf always at one door, the constable at the other, the brave resolution ever choking down despair, and stimulating new trust in God. It should be noted that a very large proportion of the Ejected clergy had sons brave enough to follow them into the Nonconformist ministry; though some, like Henry Newcome, brought up their sons to the ministry of the Established Church. Of existing claims to lineal derivation from the Nonconformists of 1662, the larger number are based on descent from a clerical ancestor.

77. Terms of Toleration.

The surviving Ejected accepted Toleration in 1689 on exclusive terms. I do not refer merely to their agreeing to subscribe the Articles (with some specified omissions). For I remember what Philip Henry said, when the Nonconformists of Shrewsbury scrupled at subscription: 'Without a candid construction [the Articles] would somewhat scruple me; so would the Bible itself taken strictly and in the letter, in those places which seem contradictory.' I remember also, that Baxter's published *Explication* of the sense in which he subscribed the Articles, practically amounted to the upsetting of some of them, and to a suspense of judgment about others. But I refer to the fact that Toleration was accepted on the express condition that Popery should remain without the pale of sufferance, and that the expression of Antitrinitarian views should be placed under the same ban with the practice of Popery.

78. Baxter on Essentials.

The mind of Baxter in regard to these disqualifications has been strangely misconceived. He has been cited as an advocate for terms of church communion broad enough to embrace both Papists and Socinians. It is surprising that it should have been imagined that any sound intelligence could have deemed this possible. The opinion is based on the position he took in 1654, when a member of the Committee of Divines entrusted by Parliament with the duty of defining the fundamentals of religion, as a test for Toleration. At that very time, curiously enough, a proposal for a sweeping comprehension was actually put before him, in private, by Nicholas Gibbon, D.D., whose wish was to 'unite all Christians through the world.' Baxter thought him 'a jugler,' and his scheme 'a Socinian Popery.' Gibbon ultimately

mended his hand; for in 1663 he added 'the Theist, Atheist, and all mankind' to his programme of conciliation.

Baxter maintained that 'I believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' expresses all the essentials, if intelligently held. In matter of public profession he proposed to limit requirements to the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue. It was urged that 'A Socinian or a Papist will subscribe all this.' 'So much the better,' said Baxter. He told the Committee that, if they feared that Papists and Socinians would creep into the church, the right way to deal with them was not by bringing forward some new test which they would not subscribe, 'but by calling them to account, whenever in preaching or writing they contradict the truth to which they have subscribed.' In other words, he proposed to rely, for the purity of the church's doctrine, upon discipline rather than upon subscription; and the best subscription was that which drew the largest number, by the act of their own voluntary adhesion, within the scope of the discipline of the church. As he puts it in 1664, 'heretics who will subscribe to the Christian faith, must not be punished because they will subscribe to no more, but because they are proved to preach or promote heresy, contrary to the faith which they profess.' His chief opponent on this point in 1654 was Owen; and the same difference of principle came out in his later correspondence with Owen (1668), respecting the terms of an accommodation between the various parties of Nonconformists. Owen admitted that Baxter's plan, as then formulated, would exclude Papists. 'But,' said he, 'have you done the same as to the Socinians?' Baxter replied as follows: 'If there be nothing against Socinianism in the Scripture, it is no heresy. If there be, as sure there is enough, and plain enough, judge them by that rule, and make not new ones.'

Keenly alive to the 'sin and mischief of using men cruelly in matters of religion,' Baxter was yet firmly persuaded that bounds must be set to the liberty of religious effort. And on every public occasion when the question came up as to the limits of Toleration, Baxter to the end of his days ranked Popery and Socinianism as alike beyond the pale of the sects to which Toleration could be extended.

79. Errors of Rome.

I am not aware that he has anything special to say as to the grounds of this exclusion of Socinianism. He says, indeed, that the followers of Bidle 'inclined much to meer Deism and infidelity,' a judgment not founded on their writings. But he makes in 1664 a remarkable confession of a change in his estimate of the errors of Roman Catholics. Originally he had reckoned that their most dangerous mistakes were to be looked for in connection with their dogmatic theology. But he had arrived at the conclusion that their 'misunderstanding us, with our mistaking of them,' had 'made the differences in these points to appear much greater than they are, and that in some of them it is next to none at all.' 'Great and unreconcilable differences' he still finds; and this in three directions, which he thus specifies: 'their church tyranny and usurpations;' 'their great corruptions and abasement of God's worship;' 'their befriending of ignorance and vice.' These are strong charges; but they hardly amount to the allegation of inseparable or irreducible characteristics. And Baxter goes on to say that whereas he had previously endorsed the opinion which he had learned from Perkins, that to be a Papist was to be a reprobate, he now entertained no manner of doubt but that among them God has his children who love him truly. 'And,' he adds, 'I can never believe that a man may not be saved by that

religion which doth but bring him to the true love of God and to a heavenly mind and life.' How then, one may say, was it possible for him still and persistently to refuse Toleration to their creed? The reasons, which with him were conclusive, have just been given. But, before we pass from this matter, there is something to be said, not so much in defence of Baxter's position, as in order to an intelligent appreciation of it.

80. Meaning of Toleration.

What was it that, in withholding Toleration from Papists and Socinians, Baxter refused to confer upon them? We hear the case sometimes, nay often, put thus: 'Every man should be allowed to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.' I cannot suppose that Baxter would have denied this. Were this the whole substance of the demand, there would never have been felt any great difficulty in conceding it. So far as I know, the law of the land has never prohibited any man from worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience. Even the Conventicle Acts expressly recognised and ratified this right. They permitted every man to have what worship he pleased within his own household, and to invite four extraneous persons to participate in such worship. But the demand for Toleration meant a good deal more than this, both in the way of relief and of privilege.

To begin with, Toleration is not reached until, to the right of worshipping God in one's own way, is joined the right of forsaking the established forms. This the Toleration Act expressly guaranteed to certified members of the tolerated bodies; but to no other person. I have very little doubt that Baxter would have thought it a legitimate thing to summon a Papist or a Socinian to his parish church, for the purpose of receiving religious instruction, by which, presumably, he might be benefited. And with all our talk of religious liberty, it is still the law of the land that to attend the services of the Established Church is an obligation, under penalty, upon all who are not members actually resorting to the worship of some tolerated religious body.

Further, in addition to the individual right of worship, Toleration meant the collective right of propaganda; the free right of using the press, as well as the pulpit, for the purpose of making proselytes. Toleration is not merely incomplete, it is felt to be futile, unless and until it conveys the whole right of dissemination and extension. Now this Baxter would concede neither to Papists nor to Socinians. It is easy for us in these days to say he should have known better; as we may say that John Locke should have known better, when he proposed similarly to exclude Papists and Atheists. There were, indeed, Independents, of the school of Philip Nye, who would have given liberty to both of Baxter's inadmissible extremes, and who actually complained to him that the refusal to tolerate Papists deprived Protestants of their liberty.

81. Nonconformist Union.

The tolerated Nonconformists of 1689 had no sooner received their liberty than they turned their thoughts towards schemes of Union. Most of them by the very terms of the Toleration, were pledged to identity in doctrinal confession. Quakers, it is true, had a special Trinitarian formulary allotted to them, and for the Baptists subscription was diminished by an Article. But the rest of the Nonconformists were put precisely on a par in point of doctrine. Nor were they distinguished by denominational titles, as had been the case under Indulgence. By statute they were all amalgamated under the one designation of Protestant Dissenters. There was already in London, as we have seen, a

common lectureship at Pinners' Hall. Its promoters now established (1689) a common fund for the aid of necessitous congregations in various parts of the country. This was followed by a project of Union, effected in the following year, of which the terms and conditions, known as *Heads of Agreement*, were printed in 1691. These terms present a close approximation to those of Baxter's Worcestershire Agreement of 1652. They were drafted by John Howe, who had himself enjoyed some experience of the working of such a union; for he had been a member (1671–1675) of the Antrim Meeting, already referred to as a precursor of Baxter's plan. Comparing the London with the Worcestershire scheme, we note these salient points of likeness. The Union was to be purely clerical; and there was the same effort of comprehension. The names Presbyterian and Congregational were to be laid aside. The concert of members was secured by subscription to a doctrinal formulary, the London Union offering a choice among five such. The objects of association were religious exercises, mutual advice, ordination, precisely as in the Worcestershire model. Following the London example, similar Unions were formed in nearly every county in the kingdom.

It has been too customary to lose sight of this movement for Union, to undervalue its importance, and to ignore its permanent effects. In London itself, it is quite true that the Union was short-lived; it died within four years of its birth. It died because some of the quondam Presbyterians insisted that some of the quondam Independents went to too great extremes in doctrine, and the Independents retaliated. Baxter himself was within an ace of being the actual destroyer of the London Uuion. He had written a fierce attack on sundry of his brethren for the countenance they apparently gave to 'antinomian' tendencies, which he discovered in the posthumous works of Tobias Crisp. Howe held him back from publishing this paper, and he substituted a milder

critique, conciliatory in its personal allusions. Daniel Williams, a younger man, almost the only theoretical Presbyterian of his day, took up the cudgels against antinomianism pretty warmly. Hence the rupture; which Baxter, dying on 8th December 1691, did not live to see. But the Baxter principle of association survived this rupture at headquarters. The Union, though broken in London, endured in the counties. In some cases, as in Lancashire, the county Union was not formed till (1693) after the London breach. From Northumberland to Cornwall, from Cheshire to Norfolk, we find these Unions. At least two of them have maintained a continuous existence to this day, the Exeter Assembly (still purely clerical), and the amalgamated (1764) Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire (which admitted laymen in 1826, and lay delegates in 1856).

82. Catholicism against Parties.

In short, the Old Dissent, so far as it had any corporate association, was organised on the Baxter model, never upon Presbyterian lines. And those who, in the latter half of the last century, revived and, as they thought, resumed the Presbyterian name, unquestionably did so because to them it meant Baxterian, in the broad sense of the word. They remembered with what shrewd discrimination Baxter had scanned the four great parties of his day, Erastians, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents; how he had found great fault with each, yet owned that each held some peculiar truths by the others overlooked. They recollected that, after making this survey, he had confessed his personal love for a section of his contemporaries who, as he says, 'addicted themselves to no sect or party at all, though the vulgar called them by the name of Presbyterians.' 'I am loth,' he adds, 'to call them a party, because they were for catholicism against parties.

83. Baxter's Calvinism.

Taken as a divisive appellation, Baxterian, even within the present century, was employed as a term of theological reproach, to denote a kind of halfway house between Calvinism and Arminianism. I cannot here discuss the question, but I have no hesitation in expressing the conclusion that Baxter's Calvinism differed from that of the Westminster divines, simply by the purity of its adhesion to the original type, unaffected by the anti-Arminian reaction. His Calvinism, like that of the framers of some of the Anglican formularies, admitted, nay insisted, that our Lord by his death had redeemed all mankind; a position not endorsed by the divines of Dort or of Westminster, yet never without its advocates among holders of Calvinistic doctrine, nor of itself calculated to bring Baxter under suspicion of looking in the Arminian direction. What did generate this suspicion was the fact, honourable alike to Baxter's good sense and to his charity, that he was prepared to treat the differences between Calvinist and Arminian not only as fair matter for honest debate and intelligent discussion, but as involving hard and deep questions, in attempting to solve which, the disputants on neither side could steer clear of difficulties. The partisan way, of course, is to be very sure of the immaculateness of your own tenet, and especially to be warmly persuaded that your adversary's position is an immoral one; as the Calvinist says of the Arminian, and the Arminian retorts on the Calvinist. Baxter's way was to abstain from the casting of prejudices, and try the case in the court of argument alone.

84. Theology and Reason.

Unquestionably the spirit of Baxter is, in one point of view, the spirit of theological precision. Baxter admired the *Symbolum Quicumque*, not indeed for its dogmatism, but for its definition. It appealed to his reasoning

faculty; it satisfied his love of close analysis, subtle distinctions, finely balanced statement. This instance of his satisfaction may to some persons seem grotesque. Yet his sense of the homage due from theology to reason vindicates for Baxter a position of the first moment among the Christian teachers of his time. He is a pioneer in that whole class of studies whose object is to elucidate and demonstrate the reasonableness of Christianity, the precursor of Locke in this respect, as in some others. His work is to substitute the argument of evidence and experience for the argument of prescription and authority; and he sets about the collecting and weighing of evidence in a manner the most absolutely frank and candid.

Take, for illustration, a typical passage, written in 1664. 'Among truths, certain in themselves, all are not equally certain unto me. I am not so foolish as to pretend my certainty to be greater than it is, merely because it is a dishonour to be less certain; nor will I, by shame, be kept from confessing . . infirmities which those have, as much as I, who hypocritically reproach me with them. My certainty that I am a man is before my certainty that there is a God. . . My certainty that there is a God is greater than my certainty that He requireth love and holiness of his creature. My certainty of this is greater than my certainty of the life of reward and punishment hereafter. My certainty of this is greater than my certainty of the endless duration of it, and of the immortality of individuate souls. My certainty of the Deity is greater than my certainty of the Christian faith. My certainty of the Christian faith, in its essentials, is greater than my certainty of the perfection and infallibility of all the Holy Scriptures. My certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the meaning of many particular texts; and so of the truth of many particular doctrines, or of the canonicalness of some certain books. . . My certainty differeth as the evidences differ.

. . And they that have attained to greater perfection and a higher degree of certainty than I, should pity me, and—produce their evidence to help me.'

85. Baxter's Candour.

Here speaks a man in whom is no self-deceit. Baxter, in theology, is always the sincere man, never saying anything because it was conventional to do so, never shrinking from saying anything because it was contrary to the text-books. Out of the sincerity of his self-questioning grew his power to make allowance for others; to gain a clear perception of their difficulties; to understand, and through understanding, by degrees to respect their spirit. Lithe as a serpent in his swift polemics, he learned at length to bear the olive branch as a dove. 'Greater light,' he confesses, 'and stronger judgment are usually with the reconcilers, than with either of the contending parties.'

Two of his admissions at this stage are especially worth noting. 'I now see more good, and more evil, in all men than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections. . . And I find that few are so bad as [the] . . censorious . . do imagine. . . Even in the wicked usually there is more . . to testify for God and holiness than I once believed there had been.' And again: 'That is the best doctrine . . which maketh men better. . . As the stock of a tree affordeth timber to build houses and cities, when the small, though higher . . branches are but to make a crow's nest, or a blaze: so the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, of heaven and holiness, doth build up the soul to endless blessedness . . when a multitude of school niceties serve but for vain janglings and hurtful diversions.

86. Spirit of the Ejected.

In conclusion, the question very naturally and properly arises, how far the broad principles and liberal doctrines of modern Nonconformists can approve themselves as a trust inherited from Baxter, and his companions in ejection. I answer that, in the best of these men, there were germs of enlightened conviction, which time and experience have since fructified to greater issues than were dreamed of in the seventeenth century. Only by slow degrees, for example, did the theology of the tolerated Nonconformists become more intelligently biblical, less anxiously scholastic. Only step by step did the full rights and the true methods of religious liberty become discernible. But if we turn from perceptions of truth, which are variable, to the formative principles of judgment and conduct, which stand fast in the fidelity of conscience and in the paramount obligation of religious sincerity, then I think that modern liberals, of whatever school, may gratefully own the spirit of the Ejected, as a salt of our English history, which hath not lost its savour.

PRIESTLEY AS A PIONEER IN THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

[**Joseph Priestley,** born 1733; at Daventry, 1751–55; at Needham, 1755–58; at Nantwich, 1758–61; at Warrington, 1761–67: at Leeds, 1767–73; with Lord Shelburne, 1773–80; at Birmingham, 1780–91; at Hackney, 1791–94; in America, 1794–1804; died 1804.]

Synopsis.

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[Address on opening the session of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, 3rd October 1894.]

87. Two Sides of Unitarianism.

CONVERSING, a short time ago, with an intelligent Roman Catholic, I was gratified to learn that he owned his debt to certain of our authors, though at the same time he expressed himself as repelled by what he found in others. 'Ah,' said he, 'you Unitarians have two sides.' 'Well,' I replied, 'you wouldn't have us as one-sided as your people are, would you?' My friend's remark was an improved echo of what we have sometimes heard nearer home, namely, that of Unitarians there are two schools; a preposterous division. In the proper sense of the term school, all Unitarians in this age and country are, so far as I am aware, of one school; for they are practically one in their principles, largely one in their methods, prevailingly one in their spirit (so far as they have got any). It is true, and it would be a sorry state of things were it otherwise, that they vary in their conclusions. And the limits of variation are not so inconsiderable that we can bisect the denomination on the score of opinion. For all Unitarians are more or less eclectic; all Unitarians are more or less individual. I do not know, within so small a compass, so large an amount of healthy divergence; or, on the other hand, so fixed an allegiance to the common principles which justify the individual independence.

Nevertheless it is the case, as my friend said, that Unitarians have two sides. They have their side of purity of doctrine and their side of catholicity of fellowship. To each they are, in principle, equally committed, and this not of choice; for neither individual men, nor bodies of men, can select their own antecedents, or choose the history of which they are at once the outcome and the continuators. We have indulged ourselves of late in historical reminiscence, perhaps almost to satiety, many of our older congregations having locally commemorated the goodly share taken by their ancestors in that chapel-

erecting period, which owed its stimulus and its protection to the Toleration Act of 1689. Let me be permitted, for it is very pertinent to my purpose, to avail myself once more of the assistance afforded by the anniversary spirit, and recalling to your recollection these two facts, that the year of grace 1894 is the centennial of the exile of Priestley, and is also the jubilee of the Dissenters' Chapels Act, let me find warrant for a study of the two sides of Unitarianism, in the career of a great man and the story of a memorable measure. Fearing it may prove a dry piece of disquisition, I have put a few pins and needles into it, just to keep attention awake.

88. History of Priestley's Mind.

The history of Priestley's mind exhibits, within the stretch of a single biography, the mental pilgrimage of our denomination. By 1794 the history of Priestley's scientific exposition was practically concluded. He was then a little over sixty years of age. The shock of his expulsion from Birmingham, three years before, had affected him, I think, far more deeply than he was himself aware. It left him capable still of a rich abundance of industrious investigation, but it was investigation on the old lines, and with a little new movement of originating genius. This is curiously the case with his scientific activity, fertile as this was in persistent and valuable experiment to his latest day. He reminds us of the alchemists of old, who sought the philosopher's stone and found chemistry, and did not know what they had found. In looking for his imaginary 'phlogiston' he had come upon his capital discovery, which makes the 1st of August 1774 a turning point in the development of modern science. He lived to see the whole scientific world interpreting his work, under the guidance of

Lavoisier, as the dispersion of phlogistic dreams, and the opening of a new era in chemistry. Refusing to be convinced of the gist of his own discovery, to the last he toiled hard to demonstrate that he had indeed obtained 'dephlogisticated air,' though the Frenchman perversely called it oxygen, and thought it an element in the composition of water. His theological activity was spread over a much longer period than that occupied by his chemical labours, which did not begin till his thirty-fifth year. And at that age he had already advanced further in theological heresy than any contemporary English divine.

89. Path to Heterodoxy.

Bred in a family of Nonconformists by conviction, for his grandfather was a Churchman, and principally owing his Christian training to a relative whose Calvinism was as sound as the charity of her religious heart was expansive, he began his life in the bosom of a robust and wholesome Puritanism. His first religious difficulty was one which does not appear to disconcert Mr. Gladstone, the difficulty, namely, of experiencing a due compunction for his personal share in the guilt of Adam's transgression. Finding that he could not 'feel a proper repentance' for man's first act of disobedience, he came to the conclusion that this primal sin was not, of itself, sufficient to doom the human race to 'the pains of hell for ever.' And as this seemed 'not quite orthodox,' he was rejected a communicant by the sturdy Calvinistic elders who ruled the local Independent church, still, I believe, one of the largest in Yorkshire. His eyes were further opened by the chance visit to Heckmondwike of an unsuccessful candidate for the vacant pulpit, John Walker, a native of Ashton-under-Lyne, a convert from

the Establishment, and a pupil of Doddridge. 'Ah, Walker,' he said, when they met again, on the eve of Priestley's departure for America, 'Ah, Walker, it was you that first led me astray from the paths of orthodoxy.' Yet Walker was heretical only in being strictly conservative. He was a Calvinist of the primitive type; not the type created by the reaction against Arminianism, and crystallised in the confession of the Westminster divines; but the type presented in the Anglican formularies, and revived among Nonconformists by Baxter. It was, however, but too true that the original Calvinism, before it was mended and moulded by the Dutch divines at Dort, offered but an imperfect resistance to the Arminian attack. Thus Walker, though no Arminian, became the cause of Arminianism in Priestley. Hence it was impossible for him to comply with the entrance test exacted of all students in Zephaniah Marryatt's London Academy at Plasterers' Hall, to which his relatives were anxious to consign him. He went, therefore, to Daventry (1751), as an Arminian and a believer in free will; he came out of it an Arian in theology, and in philosophy a determinist.

This was not the fault of Ashworth, his family connection and divinity tutor, who 'was earnestly desirous to make' him 'as orthodox as possible.' But there was a sub-tutor, Clark, of another turn of mind; and there was plenty of free discussion in class and out of it, the lectures having 'often the air of friendly conversations.' Be it noted that both tutors were pupils of Doddridge, and by him selected for tutorial office. There was no other Academy in the country marked by similar interchange of thought. In the upshot, Priestley, though a favourite with Ashworth, 'saw reason to embrace what is generally called the heterodox side of almost every question.'

90. Contemporaries left behind.

The mild and, in the main, conservative type of heterodoxy, brought from the studies and discussions of their academic period, was for many, nay most, of Priestley's contemporaries the furthest reach of theological speculation which they were able to attain. For Priestley, it was the starting point, whence his own ideas developed in quick succession. Settled in his first charge, he at once exhibited the resolve to be entirely free, and the determination to make a good use of his freedom. He never qualified under the Toleration Act, since this involved a doctrinal subscription. I have never qualified; and, as the law now stands, it is open to Mr. Beard, or any other magistrate, to require me in writing to do so, and, if I fail, I am prohibited from teaching in any religious assembly, under a penalty of not more than £10, or less than 10s., for each occasion. He declined an annual subsidy, which would have improved his handsome stipend of £30 a-year, as he 'did not choose to have anything to do with the Independents.' What did this mean? In London there were two funds which made grants to ministers of smaller congregations, one known as the Presbyterian, the other as the Congregational Fund. Neither fund raised any question about church government; but while the managers of the former were satisfied with the recommendation of neighbouring ministers, those of the latter expected some personal assurance of a man's doctrinal position. Their nominal standard was the Assembly's catechism, a manual originally drawn up for 'such as are of weaker capacity.' They asked for no subscription, nor were their requirements very rigid, but they did need a personal avowal of 'evangelical sentiments.' And Priestley was determined to be hampered in his course neither by the doctrines of the State nor by the sentiments of trustees. This was in 1755, and the date

deserves commemoration. To Priestley's action in that year is due, as its ultimate result, the ostracism of Unitarianism, as not belonging to the fellowship of Evangelical Dissent.

The vigour and the pace of his theological advance were in many respects surprising. During his three years of patient obscurity at Needham Market, while he left untouched the problem of the person of Christ, he ran ahead of all the Arians of his day. He became as unorthodox on the Atonement as a certain great statesman is now. He rejected the inspiration of the Sacred Text; maintained that there is no such thing as direct divine action upon the human soul; and criticised the reasonings of the Apostle Paul in a manner which took away the breath of that most learned of Independents, Nathaniel Lardner. Lardner was with him on the Atonement, and beyond him in the matter of Arianism; but to question the dialectic of an Epistle was, with Lardner, to endanger the foundations. Publish your essay, said Kippis, 'under the character of an unbeliever.' Little did he understand the man when he thus advised him. From first to last Priestley wrote and wrought as a believer. There was no reserve of scepticism in the frank sincerity of his mind. His attitude towards the religion of Jesus Christ was void of any trace of ambiguity. With him it was a primary conviction that to test Christianity by reason could only free it from alloy; its purity regained, its supremacy was assured.

91. Break of Ten Years.

For ten years after leaving Needham, Priestley had no time for theology. He had tried to get away to Sheffield, but the magnates of the Upper Chapel thought him 'too gay and airy.' So he migrated to Cheshire. At Nantwich he was teaching all day, from seven in the morning till seven at night. At Warrington, as he was

afflicted with a hereditary stammer, they set him to teach rhetoric; but he struck out a line of his own, converting a tutorship in the *belles lettres* into a chair of constitutional history.

92. Socinian Zeal.

At Leeds he was once more free for experiment and for speculation. His old friend Lardner had just died; and it was due to this circumstance, I have little doubt, that Priestley now took up with reverent interest a certain famous *Letter on the Logos*, which Lardner had kept by him for nine-and-twenty years, and had published at last under the cautious veil of the anonymous. A careful study of this piece abated the wonder he had formerly shared at the conclusions reached by John Seddon, of Manchester, who lived long enough to be made aware that Priestley too had become 'what is commonly called a Socinian.'

Priestley was never one of those persons who fuss and fret about names. There are Unitarians who make themselves quite unhappy about these little points. When Agrippa sneered at St. Paul, flinging upon him the new-fangled name Christian, the invention of the wits of Antioch: 'I sincerely wish I could make your majesty one, without more ado, and then there might be a gaol delivery,' replied the ready Apostle, for once reasoning right. So when Priestley fell among Socinians, it did not occur to him to split hairs about the term. He rejoiced in the truth he had got. He hailed Joshua Toulmin's proposal to write a life of Socinus; not wanting a critical life, but one 'calculated to give a favourable idea of his principles, and to inspire the lukewarm freethinkers among us with a greater zeal for truth, and more serious endeavours to promote it.' He issued his *Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity* (1770), the most successful of his tracts.

How much we owe to that *Appeal* it is difficult to say. It was the first of all our popular tracts, clear, plain, simple and weighty; and it is by no means obsolete. Written for a practical purpose, to stem the tide of Methodism, which was washing away many Dissenting congregations, in a few years 30,000 copies of it were printed, 'which,' says an opponent, 'with unparalleled contrivance he has caused to be spread over, I believe, most parts of England.' He started the *Theological Repository*, an intermittent magazine of biblical research, conducted on the broadest lines. Any scholar who could write a good paper was offered a place in its pages; from the Roman Catholic to the Deist, all were welcome. And this was no mere superficial courtesy. 'If I be in company,' he said, 'with truth and good sense, I always think myself in *good* company, whoever else be of the same party' (*Works* iv. 253). I know no man, equally sure of his own opinions, who was more ready to respect the honest opinions of others, or more anxious to bring out, for the common good, all they had in their minds. You would, perhaps, hardly have surmised that he would write of St. Thomas Aquinas, 'it is probable that the world never produced a greater man' (*ib.* iv. 201); but you might have guessed that while Lardner, Kippis, and all the great Dissenting leaders, were afraid of conceding liberty to Roman Catholics, Priestley argued, without the slightest misgiving, for their complete emancipation.

93. Religion and the State.

During his Leeds period came the successive applications on the part of the Established and the Dissenting clergy for relief from subscription. Priestley was no advocate for what is called a 'national' church; and was 'for increasing the number of sects, rather than diminishing them.' At the same time he wished to see existing establishments reformed rather than dissolved.

In this spirit he advised Lindsey, on the failure of the application for relief, not to resign; but to defy the law within the Establishment, as he himself defied it outside; to alter his prayer-book, as several churchmen did, and wait till he was ejected, which he thought unlikely to happen. When, however, Lindsey resigned his benefice (just after Priestley left Leeds), he acknowledged his friend's 'better judgment,' and heartily endorsed his plan of initiating a new religious movement under the Unitarian name. As for the Dissenting petition for relief, he thought it a paltry endeavour. It did not demand the removal of Dissenting subscription, but the modification of its terms. 'You have hitherto,' he writes in a striking pamphlet (1773), 'preferred your prayer as Christians; stand forth now as men, and ask at once for the repeal of all the penal laws which respect matters of opinion.' (*Works* xxii. p. 442.) However, on the principle that a first step is a move towards a second, he did consent to sign the petition. 'If we be compelled to believe only thirty-four and a half instead of thirty-five and a half of the thirty-nine Articles, something will be gained, and we shall have one evil less to complain of; and if we thus move on at the rate of an Article, or only half an Article, a year, the years will count more pleasantly than they have done.' (*ib.* p. 455).

94. Organisation of Congregations.

It was in Leeds that Priestley began to prove his power in the constructive work of church building. In principle he was a thorough Independent, more thorough than the Independents, with whom he chose to have nothing to do. He upheld the absolute autonomy of the particular congregation; with a high ideal of the duty of each congregation to maintain the character of a living church. The decay of church organisation, the neglect of the sacraments, the disuse of catechising, deeply concerned

him. He revived among liberal Dissenters the spirit of congregational cohesion, protesting earnestly against the substitution of a mere pulpit for a church. His account of the contemporary discharge of the ministerial office reminds one of a piece of satire ascribed to Thomas Hollis, when asked what was the difference between orthodox and liberal Dissenters. 'Well,' he said, 'you know what Strickland Gough says of the orthodox Dissenters: they worship God for twenty minutes, and dictate to men for sixty.' 'And are the liberal Dissenters any better?' 'Not much,' said Hollis; 'they dictate to God for twenty minutes, and worship men for sixty.' Priestley organised his congregations, to some extent at Leeds, still more thoroughly in Birmingham, laying his plans before them, and being rewarded by the heartiness of their adoption. He liked the old titles of elders and deacons; but would give to these officers only advisory powers, all measures requiring the confirmation of 'the people at large.' His great point was this (and here his Independency came into collision with the relics of Presbyterian feeling), that a congregation should be so organised internally that all its work and all its duties should go on naturally when, for any reason, the services of a regular minister were not available. 'It was sufficient for Christianity to have been first established by miracles; it must now support itself by its own evidence, and by the wise constitution of churches.' If a minister were ill, or needed a holiday, he thought it mere superstition to engage the services of another minister, or close the doors. His plea for the maintenance of services by the members themselves, with the assistance of printed sermons, is amusing. 'I am far from denying the use of . . ministers. . . I wish there were more than there are. . . For living instructors are in many respects preferable to dead ones. But the living instructions of dead men are certainly preferable to none. What are the Scriptures but the writings of men who are now dead?'

I may add that his chief objection to extempore preaching was, that its range would be narrow if it were made the rule; extempore prayer he preferred. Of his own preaching a good judge remarked, 'His voice and manner are those of one friend speaking to another.'

95. Religious Training of the Young.

He educated his flock by means of graduated classes for systematic religious training, in which he was not the mere preceptor driving in doctrine, but the patient and sympathetic pastor, with an ear for every difficulty, and a welcome for every expression of young minds. Here is the account of his method, rendered by one who never adopted his opinions, and who had dropped in, one Sunday afternoon, having heard that he was a 'deluded visionary.' It illustrates not merely his pains, but his irresistible personal charm. 'When we entered the place, we found a man of about the middle stature, slenderly made, remarkably placid, modest and courteous, pouring out, with the simplicity of a child, the great stores of his most capacious mind to a considerable number of young persons of both sexes, whom, with the familiarity and kindness of a friend, he encouraged to ask him questions, either during the lecture or after it, if he advanced anything which wanted explanation, or struck them in a light different from his own. The impression made upon us was so strong that we never failed afterwards to attend . . in order to profit by his lessons. . . He was the most unassuming, candid man I ever knew; and never did I hear from his lips . . one illiberal sentiment or one harsh expression.' *(Rutt* i. 162.)

Young men who are eager for work, may think of this: Priestley, at the age of sixty, conducted three classes of this kind every Sunday. besides his public service. I remember one of his old catechists, a man rude of speech. 'The curse of sham Sunday schools,' he said, 'had not

then blighted our congregations; we did not rush forth, to sit like boobies among a pack of outsiders, having nothing to teach them.' This obsolete calumny was uttered by a *laudator temporis acti*, between thirty and forty years ago; I repeat it, simply as witnessing to the emphatic impression, left by Priestley's work, that the best service a congregation can render to society is the efficiency of its internal life and training. But I must add that Priestley was an earnest promoter of Sunday schools, of the type in vogue in his day, namely, for giving elementary education to those who had no week-day opportunities. Now, I do not think this account of his organising side is a digression from my theme. Theological science with Priestley was for practical use, and not for intellectual curiosity. Theology was valuable to him as the purified thought of a living church.

96. Philosophy of the Human Mind.

Six years at Calne and London, as librarian and literary companion to Lord Shelburne, gave him leisure to complete his philosophy of the human mind. Here his great master was Hartley, whose *Observations on Man* (1749) he ranked next to the Bible. From Hartley he had got his determinism, based on the doctrine of the association of ideas. He called his psychology by the name of materialism, which is a little misleading, for he had adopted, from Boscowich, the theory that matter consists but of points of force. As Channing interprets him, he changed matter 'from a substance into a power.' His resultant doctrine of the homogeneity of man was execrated as atheism. Yet surely to affirm that the Creator of all can elevate physical force to thinking power, is to raise rather than to depress the conception of the marvels of omnipotence. A Welsh poet, David Davis, distrusting the resources of that heavenly language, though he had produced in it a version of Gray's *Elegy*

which Welshmen think far superior to the original, penned an inscription for Priestley's coffin, in what he seems to have mistaken for English rhyme:

> 'Here lie at rest,
> In oaken chest,
> Together packed most nicely,
> The bones and brains,
> Flesh, blood, and veins,
> And soul of Dr. Priestley.'

Priestley is said to have been 'much pleased' with this composition; he was himself a poet. His doctrine of the functional origin of the soul, while not entirely new, had never before, I think, been advanced by a divine. But its consequence, the sleep of the soul between death and the resurrection, had been advocated on independent grounds, not merely by sundry Fathers of the church, but by such respectable modern authorities as Luther, Milton, Dodwell, and Edmund Law, and was no uncommon opinion among Priestley's contemporaries. Bishop Hampden, of Hereford, was, I believe, the last prominent divine who upheld it. It is still an article of faith with some of the minor sects, *e.g.*, the Christadelphians.

97. Controversy with Horsley.

Priestley's Birmingham ministry was distinguished by his eight years' controversy with Horsley, in which the archdeacon was the aggressor. Horsley's father had been a Dissenting minister; his mother, a Scottish Presbyterian. He was, with Priestley, a fellow of the Royal Society, and they had already come, amicably enough, into controversy on the doctrine of necessity. Their greater controversy arose out of Priestley's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1782), and culminated in his *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ* (1786), to which Dr. Martineau has assigned a place on

'the choicest shelves of every theological library,' and which Horsley, with great wisdom, never read. It is remarkable, that Horsley's own theology had grown by a process the exact reverse of Priestley's. Butler's *Analogy* (1736) had convinced him that there are mysteries in religion; the first he accepted was the Atonement; then followed the pre-existence of Christ; at length the Platonists brought him, as he says, 'to a right mind;' and he was converted into 'a firm and decided Trinitarian' by perusing that heretical masterpiece, Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712), though he candidly owns that he does not recommend the book as likely to have the same effect on others.

As a pure polemic, Horsley was beyond question by far the stronger man. No controversialist, or would-be controversialist, can afford to neglect the study of Horsley's marvellous *Tracts* (1789; *cf.* pp. iv, 88, 101, 233). Yet when we have a polemic who declines, as Horsley did, to enter on the main argument, and deliberately avows it as his one purpose to 'destroy' his adversary's 'credit, and the authority of his name,' we are fully prepared to find, as indeed is the case, that a triumph of brilliant and commanding style, of matchless sarcasm, and of microscopic critical pungency, carries with it no victory of temper or of substance. 'His point is the antiquity and the truth of the Unitarian doctrine; mine is Dr. Priestley's incompetence.' Certainly Horsley demonstrated that Priestley's mind, impervious to Platonic ideas, was, so far, not constructed for a sympathetic estimate of the theology of the Greek Fathers. His repugnance to their underlying philosophy may be proof of the limits of his mental digestion; at the same time it sharpened his sensitiveness to the introduction of a new and foreign element in the patristic exposition of the Gospel. Horsley had twitted him with being in Platonism 'a child.' 'This does not, I hope,' responded Priestley, 'prevent me from being a man in Christianity.'

I do not commend him as a tactical controversialist. He took his tone, invariably, from his opponent for the time being; hence to the froward he sometimes showed himself froward. In reply to Horsley, he was, perhaps, too eager to fling back the nonsensical charge of incompetence. Yet I confess I enjoy his attitude. The calm imperturbability of his smiling insistance, unfaltering and unflagging, was something new in a Dissenting scholar; and we need not wonder that it upset the equanimity of the mighty Gibbon, as well as of the owners of episcopal wigs, little used to be told that they had much to learn. Even better than his determination to teach was his constant readiness to be a learner himself.

98. Advancing Thought.

Controversy is very often hurtful to him who engages in it, as tending to fix his mind in positions from which his *amour propre* forbids him to retreat. But Priestley had no self-love of this kind. Controversy did him service; it quickened instead of retarding the frankness of his investigation, and the advance of his thought. Those eight years of intellectual activity, under virulent attack, were not years of anxious self-defence, they were years of progressive theological development. Lindsey was alarmed by Priestley's rapid strides. For what did he come to? He rejected the doctrine of the Virgin birth as without historical basis. He expressed the conviction that the place of Christ's nativity was Nazareth. He reached the position that our Lord was neither naturally impeccable nor intellectually infallible, had been under illusion respecting demoniacal possession, had misconceived the import of certain of the prophecies, and had sometimes recommended indisputable truths by halting arguments. As for the doctrine that Christ made the world, he saw no good proof of its apostolic origin;

but if otherwise, inasmuch as it was certainly no part of Christ's own Gospel, he did not think we should be 'under any obligation to believe it, merely because it was an opinion held by an Apostle.' (*Works* vi. 40.) Whatever we may think of some of these conclusions, or any of them (I am their chronicler, not their apologist), the fact that they were enunciated by Priestley over a hundred years ago, illustrates the extraordinary span of his mental history. We are a long way from the theology of the puritan household. Save in his tenacious adhesion to the literal verity, and evidential value, of the miraculous element in the biblical narratives, and in his conservative estimate of the dates and authorship of biblical books, there is scarcely a point on which the most independent of modern scholars can pride himself on having advanced beyond the outposts of Priestley. The conception of a Christianity without miracle hardly presented itself to his mind; though in a striking passage, he declares that, all miracle apart, the life and teaching of Christ is 'so great a thing . . that it could not but have been inspired by God.' (*ib.* vii. 213.) He never claims his as 'the only view in which Christianity is credible . . but as that in which it is by far the most credible.' Further, he repeatedly maintains that religion itself is but a means to an end, that end being the love of virtue for its own sake, and affirms that, 'provided the great end be gained . . the means are of no farther value.' (*ib.* xvi. 24, 372.)

99. Influence on Liberal Dissent.

It is plain that he struck even the traditional liberals of his day as a highly dangerous innovator. We plume ourselves with a happy tradition of open-mindedness attaching to the Presbyterian section of English Dissent. I do not forget the splendid services of John Taylor, the last of the Puritan schoolmen, and the coryphaeus of an

enlightened and influential type of conservative Arianism. Nor do I undervalue the effect in the Midlands of the anonymous writings of Paul Cardale, who became a Socinian about the same time as John Seddon. Yet, on the whole, the Presbyterians had done less for a progressive theological science than any other section of Dissent; their main work was in other directions. There is a curious passage, written (1765) while Priestley was still at Warrington, in which he estimates the sects around him, in regard to their probable tolerance of a full latitude of free inquiry. He decides for the Quakers, 'because, different as my opinions are from theirs, I have so much confidence in their moderation that I believe they would let me live, write, and publish what I please, unmolested, among them. And this, I own, is more than I could promise myself from any other body of Christians whatever; the Presbyterians perhaps least of all.' In a later edition (1771) this severe judgment was modified into 'the Presbyterians by no means excepted.' (*Works* xxii. 138.) He was not thinking here of men like Richard Price, who, bred in Independency, became the ornament of the Presbyterian name. Sharing not one of Priestley's speculations, Price proved himself his true partner in a common devotion to truth, at once the gentlest of controversialists and the warmest of friends. Among Priestley's most disparaging anonymous critics was Percival, the virtual founder of the Manchester Academy. On the other hand, among his staunchest supporters were William Turner, of Wakefield, and Newcome Cappe, of York. But it must be admitted that the more conspicuous friends to his theological pursuits were originally outsiders to the Presbyterian body; men like Lindsey, who represented a whole school of Cambridge divines, and Belsham, who came over from the Independents. The truth is, Priestley put a new spirit into the community which he joined, and his friends brought new blood into it.

100. Service to Theological Science.

If you ask me what I should reckon his greatest service to theological science, I should say that it is to be found in his adoption of the historical method of investigating the problems of doctrine, and in his special handling of that method. The pith of his argument is well given in his letters to Geddes, the Roman Catholic scholar, who, to his honour be it spoken, had thus addressed him: 'I grant that you are a Christian as well as I, and I embrace you as a fellow-disciple in Jesus.' Priestley was the precursor of the modern theories of theological development, though I do not think he used the term. His term was 'corruption,' a term which, it may be said, begs a very important question. At any rate, it throws into strong relief the fact, on which all are agreed, that there is, and must be, some primitive nucleus whence developments proceed. Now it is the object of all who, for any reason, are interested in the origin of Christianity, to reach this primitive nucleus at its first, undeveloped and uncorrupted stage. Where are we to seek it? By universal consent, we must go to the New Testament. There, if anywhere, we shall come upon its traces. Here the agreement begins and ends. The New Testament is in all hands. But one man finds the Trinity in it; another, the simplest Monotheism; a third, the Papacy; a fourth, the supremacy of the illuminating Spirit. The same words yield opposite results, because the principles of interpretation differ. The New Testament is to be interpreted by the voice of the Church; or by the testimony of the Creeds; or by the opinions of the Fathers of the first centuries, before the age of dogmatic creeds began at Nicæa. These had been the expedients proposed by the Catholic, the Anglican, the Arian respectively. Socinus had rejected them all. It cannot matter to me (so, in effect, he contended) what any Church, or any Creed, or any Father may have said; I

go to the New Testament myself, to read it with my own eyes, to understand it with my own mind.

101. Key to the New Testament.

This was not the position of Priestley. He thought this as irrational a proceeding as any of those which it superseded. Even if, by good luck, the true sense were reached, there was no means of proving it to be such. The New Testament, in Priestley's view, is not to be construed as a book of enigmas, which might belong to any age. It is not dropped straight out of heaven into the hands of the man of to-day, for him to make what he will of it. It belongs to a specific period; it was written for a given class of persons; it was written to be understood. 'Therefore,' said Priestley, 'it will be an unanswerable argument *à priori* against any particular doctrine being contained in the Scriptures, that it was never understood to be so by those persons for whose immediate use the Scriptures were written, and who must have been much better qualified to understand them, in that respect at least, than we can pretend to be at the present day.' (*Works* vi. 7.)

Accordingly it is the whole object of Priestley's histories of doctrine to get at the mind of the common Christian people in the first age; to make their primary understanding of Scripture the norm for its true interpretation; and then to trace the process by which this first impression, this real meaning, suffered transmutation by the speculative genius of philosophising divines. Of the Nicene Council, he quaintly says, 'there was no House of Commons in that assembly.' It 'represented the Christian Church in no other sense than the House of Lords might be said to represent the English nation.' He conceived that he could penetrate to this unsophisticated sense of the primitive believers, through the very writings of the Fathers, whereby it had been overlaid and

obscured. Their admissions, their rebukes, their appeals, their laboured arguments, their surviving conservatisms: all were materials to his purpose.

102. Success of the Historic Method.

The plan was novel, the conception original, the whole endeavour strictly scientific in its method and basis. And I do not think that Priestley's work in this department has received the full recognition which it rightly claims from us, whether we regard its spirit or its execution. The progress of biblical knowledge implies, no doubt, a readjustment of his argument and a revision of his conclusions. But the readjustment and revision are effected by the use of principles which he was the first to set forth and apply. We now go behind the New Testament, just as he went behind the Fathers. The New Testament itself is, to us, largely a record by help of which we may reach the first impression, made by the life, and work, and word of Christ. In so doing, we do but carry out his suggestions and carry on his method. He is the genuine precursor of the properly historic treatment of biblical and theological questions.

He did not anticipate immediate success for his labours, or hope to make much impression upon nine out of ten of those who deigned to read him. 'All I can do,' he said, 'must be to make the most of my tenth man.' 'My chief expectations,' he added, 'are from the young and from posterity.' And on one point, of cardinal moment, posterity has not only adopted his method, but has largely confirmed his verdict. Up to his time, it had been the contention of the leaders of liberal theology that the primitive doctrine of the Church was Arian. Socinianism, whatever foothold it might claim in Scripture, was judged to be a modern invention in the Church. He reversed this judgment. The primitive Christianity was Humanitarian. Arianism, be its Scripture warrant

what it may, was of later introduction, and as a Christian creed it came into being as a reaction against a growing orthodoxy.

103. Nemesis.

So far had he got, when the savage outburst of popular violence intervened, which broke his career, and transferred him, after a short interval, to America. I confess I am fond of the coincidences of chronology. Surely it is a synchronism not to be forgotten, that the centennial of Priestley's exile is also the centennial of Paine's publication of that temple-shaking work, *The Age of Reason*. 'The patriarch of the sect is fled,' wrote Horsley, with an arrogant joy. Fled was the harbinger of an incorrupt Christianity; what then? Christianity itself was exposed to the instant menace of a new and radical assault, which the patrons of its corruptions had rendered themselves utterly powerless to repel.

104. Removal to America.

But I must tell you why he went; and the rather, as it allows me to pay my tribute of admiring affection to one of the best wives a minister ever had. I have no clear impression of Ruth Channing. Hannah Lindsey, I think, was well hit off in her husband's mild remonstrance, 'Are you not uncandid, my dear?' But Mary Priestley I know and love. Married at the age of eighteen, she proved herself an unequalled housewife; taught her maids to work with their heads as well as their hands; took from her husband every domestic care; could be tart of tongue, they say, but never to him; drew him punctually from his laboratory for that evening game of skill, which was her bright hour and his, at the close of every busy day; stuck to her old-fashioned Arianism

through all his heresies, not from mere use and wont, for she was a woman of culture and reading; and with a most dainty and incisive pen, wrote the best letter of any woman of her time. Priestley told his brother Timothy that his wife was very orthodox. So, on the first introduction, Timothy began to deplore his brother's heterodoxy. The young matron speedily caused his ears to tingle for his impudence. 'She orthodox!' cried Timothy, 'Why, she's *no* dox!' If Priestley had set his wife to answer Horsley, she would have made the bishop go and drown himself. She had stitched with her own hands every bed-curtain and window-curtain in their Birmingham house, and she had seen her needlework in a blaze. 'I do not think,' she wrote to Mrs. Barbauld, 'that God can require it of us as a duty, after they have smote one cheek, to turn the other. I am for trying a new soil.' And I can imagine the wifely dictum, 'fallible as touching her human nature, infallible as touching her female sex,' with which she thus defined the future: 'Joseph, we pack for America.' He knew her worth, and he obeyed. 'A noble and generous mind,' such was his true estimate of her, 'feeling strongly for others, little for herself, through life.' Strongly indeed did she feel. 'Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, do we wipe off against you.' Never was counterstroke to persecution more effective in its moral impression. At the bidding of Mary Priestley all Europe pointed at this recreant land with the finger of scorn. When they had crossed the sea, she wrote to Belsham with a gay heart, 'I never felt more at home.'

105. Universalism.

In his Pennsylvanian retreat, Priestley's theology reached its final term; and found its last reward, not by the dry exercise of his understanding, but as the fruit of the pangs of his heart. The deepest tragedy of Priestley's

life has never been written; all but the obscurest vestige of it is effaced from the pages of his biographer. Suffice it here to say, that the most unfilial act of which a son can be guilty, threw its shade upon the later years of his exile. He had early rejected the doctrine of unending torment, but had not replaced it by any settled alternative; inclining perhaps to the theory of conditional immortality, and the annihilation of the wicked. Universalism, as then sometimes preached in America, proclaimed that, retribution being exhausted in this life, the next world will be a scene of unmixed happiness for all. This doctrine repelled Priestley, as it repelled Channing, on moral grounds. But the problem of the ultimate fate of the sinful had hitherto been to him but one among abstract speculations; it had come into his home, in the train of an incommunicable griet. The measure of his forgiveness as a father enlarged his perception of the Infinite Pity, whence all human compassions flow; and by slow degrees, through hesitating hope and faltering prayers, he reached at length a faith, as sure as it was sweet, in the all-restoring power of Almighty Love.

'Read this,' he said on his death-bed to his faithful son, putting into his hand a small pamphlet on this topic, 'it contains my sentiments, and a belief in them will be a support to you in the most trying circumstances, as it has been to me. We shall all meet finally. We only require different degrees of discipline, suited to our different tempers, to prepare us for final happiness.' With a quaint and touching reference to his cherished philosophy, he bade them put upon his simple gravestone the peaceful words: 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' And yet, so childlike in some respects was his speculation, he thought the slumber could not be long. Within ten years he expected the return of the Master whom he loved, to claim his own. In sooth his millennial prospect was a thrust of nature, piercing the dead wall of his reasoned system.

106. Dissenting Trusts.

I do not find that Priestley ever alludes to an 'open trust,' that shibboleth of our modern platforms. And for this good reason: that, until legislation opened retrospectively the legal import of terms, no early trust for Protestant Dissenters could be other than a trust for the theology of the thirty-nine Articles. The Trinity Act of 1813 made Dissenting trusts, since created, applicable to Unitarian use; but it did no more. The litigation which began with the Wolverhampton case in 1817, and reached its ultimate decision in the Hewley case in 1842, established the fact that none of the older Dissenting trust properties, even supposing them founded by Unitarians, were applicable to Unitarian uses. Hence the appeal to Parliament to rectify the position of those in actual and hereditary possession. So far as trusts are 'open,' their openness in a legal sense dates from 1844, though as a matter of fact, the older chapel deeds, in all sections of Dissent, rarely enter into details of doctrine; much more rarely than is the case with the trust-deeds of early endowments.

107. Dissenters' Chapels Act.

Now, the Dissenters' Chapels Act, though short, consists of two parts, which are quite distinct. The first part evoked no opposition, save from Bishop Phillpotts, of Exeter. It simply made retrospective the toleration of Unitarian opinion and worship, effected by the Trinity Act. This was a very substantial gain. One effect of it was, that the Trinity Act no longer exists. It was swept from the Statute Book on a subsequent revision (1873), the clause excluding Antitrinitarians being at the same time removed from the Toleration Act. This retrospective legalisation of Antitrinitarian opinion was all that was requisite for the protection of Unitarian holders, wherever it could be

proved that the founders of trusts held Antitrinitarian views. But it would not protect them in the use of the older chapels, since these were certainly not founded by Antitrinitarians. James Owen, of Oswestry, who was twice invited to Cross-street, Manchester, in a tract which he wrote in 1699, in conjunction with John Chorlton, of Cross-street, affirms that no Dissenting congregation, within his knowledge, would admit a Socinian to communion. And I believe this statement to be quite true, if we except a few of the Baptist and Independent congregations of that date.

The promoters, then, of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill proposed that, wherever in trust-deeds the expressions were general ('Protestant Dissenters,' 'worship of Almighty God,' 'worship of God through Jesus Christ,' and so on, without further specification of doctrine) the usage of a term of years should be 'taken as conclusive evidence' of the specific doctrines which the chapels were established to inculcate. Practically this would have amounted to refounding the chapels in the interest of the existing holders, with the further effect of tying them up, for all time, to the opinions of the specified period.

And this was what the promoters of the Bill actually asked. They soon had some misgivings. For in a petition from Renshaw-street Chapel, Liverpool, presented more than a month after the first reading of the Bill, I find this caution: 'care being taken that its second clause shall be so defined as to leave with each successive congregation, throughout all time, that religious liberty which your petitioners supposed themselves legally to enjoy.' The remodelling of the Bill was due to Lord Sandon, whose pedigree begins with an ejected minister. He was the first to point out, in the House of Commons, what the Bishop of Exeter had stated in the House of Lords, namely, that the Bill would impose a new test, binding congregations in perpetuity to particular opinions.

Hence, not the original Bill, but the amendment of Mr. Cardwell, became law. And the Act, as it stands, provides that the usage of twenty-five years, immediately prior to a suit, shall be 'taken as conclusive evidence' that the opinions held during that period 'may properly' be held. The usage of a quarter of a century protects opinion in the present; it does not bind it upon the future. Usage, under the Act, gives no right of possession; it simply gives right of occupation, while the usage lasts.

108. An 'Open Trust' as the Law now stands.

So far, so good. But what protection is there for new opinion which rises up to-day, and has not yet run its course of twenty-five years? None whatever, that I can see. Break your usage, either as regards religious doctrine or mode of worship, and you have no defence against a suit; unless, indeed, you are reverting to the opinions and practices of the founders, which are always legitimate. An 'open trust,' as the law now stands, is a trust whose openness to new opinion any interested objector may instantly close. In short, the Act recognises no opinions as legitimate which are not at least twenty-five years old. And, by an unaccountable omission, the act legitimatises no changes whatever in church government. In this department, if the deed is silent, the founders' norm must prevail, and can be modified only by an absolutely unanimous vote, in accordance with recent decisions.

I do not, therefore, view the Dissenters' Chapels Act as the perfection of legislation; though I can well understand and appreciate the deep emotion of gratitude which it inspired, half a century ago, in those whose ancestral houses of prayer were delivered from then present menace by its means. The debates upon the Bill in 1844 are admirable reading still. If the most fervid piece of

eloquence in support of the Bill is to be found in the peroration of the Roman Catholic orator, Richard Lalor Sheil, yet the speech which most truly went to the heart of the matter was by a statesman to whom I have already made references; described by the Bishop of Exeter, the strongest opponent of the Bill, as one 'whom no one knew in private without loving him, and whom no one knew in public without respecting him.'

109. Principle at Issue.

Mr. Gladstone then, while characteristically declining to say anything about the particular provisions of the Bill, brought home to the House with great effect the case of the Liberal Dissenters, as they themselves understood it; showing that the real question at issue was not the protection of specific doctrine, but the freedom of religious association. 'Here,' he said, 'were certain persons who founded these chapels, entertaining one creed; and the present possessors of those chapels profess another creed. I admit that that sounds startling. But if you take the pains to follow the course of events from year to year, it is impossible to say that, at any given period, the transition from one doctrine to another was made. It was a gradual and an imperceptible transition. . . . . The parties who effected it made a different use of the principle of inquiry by private judgment from those who had preceded them, but they acted on a principle fundamentally the same, and though I may lament the result, I do not see how their title is vitiated, because they used it to one effect, and others to another.'

Thoroughly would Priestley have endorsed this statement of the principle at issue. 'Were any man now living,' he writes, 'to tell me he was going to prepare an instrument, whereby he should bind himself and his heirs for ever from changing their opinions, or from acting in consequence of any change in them, I should not easily

believe him.' And again: 'The wisdom of one generation will ever be the folly of the next. And yet, though we have seen this verified in the history of two thousand years, we persist in the absurd maxim of making a preceding generation dictate to a succeeding one. . . . . Can we think that wisdom will die with us? No; our creeds, could we be so inconsistent with ourselves as to draw up any, would, I make no doubt, be rejected with equal disdain by our posterity.' (*Works* xxii. 125.) For himself he frankly declared, 'I will not pretend to say when my creed will be fixed' (*ib.* xviii. 414).

110. Priestley and Unitarian Chapels.

Nevertheless, dreadful to relate, Priestley approved of calling unfettered places of worship by the style and title of Unitarian Chapels; and no more repented of this as a man, than he did of the sin of Adam as a boy. Shall I try to imagine his reasons? In the first place, then, he knew this could do no harm. For the name of a building, even if printed on a board, or inscribed upon a stone, is not 'an instrument declaring a trust,' but simply a piece of current information. In the next place, as a practical man, he conceived that this information might be sometimes useful. One of his Unitarian Chapels is now called a Free Church; and I was amused the other day when a young man, who had been lodging literally next door to it for some time, asked me where there was a Unitarian Chapel, and said he had thought of dropping in at this place; but he stopped when he saw the notice-board, having had enough of the Free Church, in Scotland. I advised him to try next door, saying the minister might possibly go into fits if I called it a Unitarian Chapel, but I believed he would find it an admirable imitation. I added that there was a class of persons known to me who, from a religious principle,

always call a spade an implement of agriculture (when they remember to do so), for fear lest, in the prospective evolutions of philosophy, the term spade should at some future time come to mean a clog. Thirdly, and this is the important thing, to Priestley the Unitarian name denoted a few primary theological ideas (the chief of which was that only one person is to be worshipped as God), mixed with a few salutary principles (the chief of which was that religion is susceptible of improvement). It did not call attention to the ideas only, but to the principles as well, which permeated the ideas as their life and salt. Hence, in his hands the term received its impress as the name of a Christian community, equally committed to purity and to progress. And this last element in its meaning is perfectly well understood by our outside critics. Many years ago I was kindly entertained by five Calvinistic bishops at Debrecen, known in Hungary as the Calvinistic Rome. '*Unitárius*,' said one of them, 'I don't like the name; *az Unitárius* is a man who hasn't said his last word.' 'I am glad to find you are aware of that,' I replied. In a recent and very forcible article, it is remarked that our 'churches are Unitarian because they are free.' I grant this may be the order in individual cases. But it reverses the historical situation of our churches. Their insistance on a full freedom has sprung from their Unitarianism.

111. The Priestley Spirit.

We cannot stand where Priestley stood, nor would he expect us to do so. I am not a Unitarian of the Priestley stamp, but I should like to think that I am a Unitarian in the Priestley spirit. And though it may seem a paradox, it is nevertheless true, that it was Priestley's perfect candour that converted me to some of the opinions which he most decisively rejects. The ambition of leadership

he entirely disavowed. 'The man who takes the lead in any body of men whatever, must,' he said, 'be a man of more caution and prudence than I can boast. . . . . He must always speak and write with the greatest moderation, so as to give the least offence that the case will possibly admit of. Now, it is very proper that there should be such men in the world. I esteem and value them, thinking them very useful in several situations; but it is evident that I have not been one of them.' (*Works* xxii. 516.) No, his office was that of a pioneer, and well he did that work. This was his spirit: 'I stand in need of liberty myself, and I wish that every creature of God may enjoy it equally with myself.' These were his maxims, and he commended them for universal adoption: 'To think with freedom; to speak and write with boldness; to suffer in a good cause with patience; to begin with caution, to proceed with vigour' (*ib.* 455-6).

112. Programme of Studies.

And now gentlemen, brothers in the fellowship of the studies of this College, we will take these last words, 'to proceed with vigour,' as our stimulating motto for this new session. It is my happiness,. and yours, that the teaching power of the College is both varied and strengthened by the accession of Mr. Manning, who has already rendered no slight services to us as the coadjutor of Mr. Philemon Moore in the Visitorship. We have put one in place of three, long enough to exhibit a patent symbol of our Unitarianism; reverting now to the Daventry standard of equipment, we can boast of two Tutors. The weak side of Daventry was the neglect of languages, biblical criticism, and ecclesiastical history. Its staple was dogmatics, and philosophy, including in this category psychology, ethics, and physics. This last we leave entirely to Owens, and from Owens we expect for our ordinary students that grounding in Arts which

must form the working basis of the scholarly divine. Mr. Manning will take over the Old Testament department of biblical study; and will invite you to repair a defect in our linguistic programme, by acquiring some little knowledge of that ancient but still living speech, which, sharing with Welsh the dubious honour of being the language of the first beguilement, seems in modern times to have somewhat exhausted its primeval powers of temptation. Yet Priestley, before he was twenty, had twice read through the Hebrew Bible, once with points, and once without. Mr. Manning will also give a course of lectures on Natural Theology; and another course upon the Philosophies of Ancient Greece, introductory to the reading of Plato's Crito. My own topics will be the New Testament department; that of Church History and the History of Doctrines; the department of Biblical Theology; and that of English Literature; with reading in the Greek Testament and the Fathers. And I should like to say that I propose to give, as there will be no others of that kind this session, some few special lectures, to which the presence of all friends of the College may be invited.

113. Closing Words.

Gentlemen, your Tutors will do their best; and you have that in you to-day which promises that you will do yours. Remember that these are golden hours of opportunity, and days of self-discipline. Despise not drudgery. When Dan Taylor, the Baptist, called upon Priestley at Birmingham, he found him sweeping the floor of his laboratory. 'That's condescension, Doctor!' said he. 'No, sir,' was the characteristic reply, 'it is no more than duty.' Relax not diligence; keep up to your own mark, not wearily, but with bright resolve that makes its own sunshine. 'The acquisition of learning,' said

Horsley, 'is indeed laborious, but its fruit is sweet.' And amid the acquisitions of the mind, stand firm to the high purpose of your calling, in singleness of soul; resisting temptation, making no terms with evil, keeping conscience pure and true, 'as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,' living as ever in his sight, and laying bare to him continually your difficulties and your hopes.

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